

All I Really Want to Do

(The Byrds)

I ain't lookin' to compete with you
Beat or cheat or mistreat you
Simplify you, classify you
Deny, defy or crucify you
All I really want to do
Is, baby be friends with you

No, I ain't lookin' to fight with you
Frighten you or tighten you
Drag you down or drain you down
Chain you down or bring you down
All I really want to do
Is, baby, be friends with you

I don't want to fake you out
Take or shake or forsake you out
I ain't lookin' for you to feel like me
See like me or be like me

I don't want to meet your kin
Make you spin or do you in
Or select you or dissect you
Or inspect you or reject you
All I really want to do
Is, baby, be friends with you
Baby, be friends with you
Baby, be friends with you

The Byrds loved to cover Bob Dylan: the original band released 13 Bob Dylan covers. The Byrds typically kept the lyrics and the basic rhythm and melody pretty the same as in the Bob Dylan original. Instead, they added value with their inarguably better singing, and their often greater attention to harmony and production.

"All I Really Want to Do" was the second single by the American folk rock band the Byrds, and was released on June 14, 1965, by Columbia Records (see 1965 in music). The song was also included on the band's debut album, *Mr. Tambourine Man*, which was released on June 21, 1965. The version of the song released as a single is a different vocal take to the version found on the *Mr. Tambourine Man* album, as evidenced by the slight lyrical variations in the song's first verse and the different running times the two versions have; the single is 2:02 minutes in length while the album version is slightly longer at 2:04. The single reached #40 on the Billboard Hot 100 and #4 on the UK Singles Chart.

The single was rush-released by the band's record label, Columbia Records, when it transpired that Cher was about to issue a rival cover version of the song on the Imperial label. However, the Byrds and their management were largely unconcerned about Cher's imminent release, feeling that there was sufficient room in the charts for both versions. In fact, the Byrds were reluctant to release another Dylan-penned single at all, feeling that it was somewhat formulaic. However, Columbia was insistent, believing that in the wake of the Byrds' debut single, "Mr. Tambourine Man", another Dylan cover equaled an instant hit. A chart battle ensued, largely instigated by the music press and Columbia (who were determined to bury Cher's release), but ultimately the single stalled at #40 on the U.S. charts, while Cher's cover reached #15. The reverse was true in the UK, however, where the Byrds' version became the fastest selling single in CBS Records' history, finally reaching #4 while Cher's recording peaked at #9.

The Byrds' version of the song is noticeably different in structure to Dylan's. It begins with Jim McGuinn's jangling guitar introduction (played on a 12-string Rickenbacker guitar) and features a substantially changed, ascending melody progression in the chorus, made more attractive by the band's angelic harmonies. In addition, the band completely changed the melody to one of the song's verses, in order to turn it into a Beatlesque, minor-key bridge. Although McGuinn sang lead on most of the song, rhythm guitarist David Crosby sang lead on the middle eight.