

"Smoke On The Water" D6 = all strings in 2nd fret

Famous riff x2 1st string 0 3 5 0 3 6 5 0 3 5 3 0

Am

We all came out to Montreux

D6 Am

On the Lake Geneva shoreline

To make records with a mobile

D6

We didn't have much time

Am

Frank Zappa and the Mothers

D6 Am

Were at the best place a-round

But some stupid with a flare gun

D6 Am

Burned the place to the ground

D Bb Am Am/C Am
Smoke on the water, a fire in the sky

Am Am/C Am D Bb **Riff x 2**

Smoke on the water

They burned down the gambling house

It died with an awful sound

Funky Claude was running in and out

Pulling kids out the ground

When it all was over

We had to find another place

But Swiss time was running out

It seemed that we would lose the race

Smoke on the water, a fire in the sky

Smoke on the water

We ended up at the Grand Hotel

It was empty, cold and bare

But with the Rolling truck Stones thing just outside

Making our music there

With a few red lights and a few old beds

We made a place to sweat

No matter what we get out of this

I know, I know we'll never forget

Smoke on the water, a fire in the sky

Smoke on the water

The lyrics tell a true story: on 4 December 1971, Deep Purple were in Montreux, Switzerland, to record an album using a mobile recording studio (rented from the Rolling Stones and known as the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio—referred to as the "Rolling truck Stones thing" and "a mobile" in the lyrics) at the entertainment complex that was part of the Montreux Casino (referred to as "the gambling house" in the song lyric).

On the eve of the recording session, a Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention concert was held in the casino's theatre. This was to be the theatre's final concert before the casino complex closed down for its annual winter renovations, which would allow Deep Purple to record there. At the beginning of Don Preston's synthesizer solo on "King Kong", the place suddenly caught fire when somebody in the audience fired a flare gun toward the rattan covered ceiling, as mentioned in the "some stupid with a flare gun" line.^{[9][10]} Although there were no major injuries, the resulting fire destroyed the entire casino complex, along with all the Mothers' equipment. The "smoke on the water" that became the title of the song (credited to bass guitarist Roger Glover, who related how the title occurred to him when he woke from a dream a few days later) referred to the smoke from the fire spreading over Lake Geneva from the burning casino as the members of Deep Purple watched from their hotel. "It was probably the biggest fire I'd ever seen up to that point and probably ever seen in my life" said Glover. "It was a huge building. I remember there was very little panic getting out, because it didn't seem like much of a fire at first. But, when it caught, it went up like a fireworks display." The "Funky Claude" running in and out is referring to Claude Nobs, the director of the Montreux Jazz Festival who helped some of the audience escape the fire.^[11] Swiss police named Zdeněk Špička, a Czechoslovak refugee living in Épalinges, as a suspect in the case, but he fled Switzerland shortly after.^[12]

Claude Nobs (2006), the "Funky Claude" mentioned in the song

Left with an expensive mobile recording unit and no place to record, the band was forced to scout the town for another place to set up. One promising venue (found by Nobs) was a local theatre called The Pavilion, but soon after the band loaded in and started working/recording, neighbours took offence at the noise. The band was only able to lay down backing tracks for one song (based on Blackmore's riff and temporarily named "Title No.1"), before local police shut them down.^[13]

After about a week of searching, the band rented the nearly-empty Grand Hôtel de Territet and converted its hallways and stairwells into a makeshift studio, where they laid down most of the tracks for what would become their most commercially successful album, Machine Head (which is dedicated to Claude Nobs).^{[14][15]}

The only song from *Machine Head* not recorded entirely in the Grand Hotel was "Smoke on the Water" itself, which had been partly recorded during the abortive Pavilion session. Its lyrics were composed later, primarily by Gillan and based around Glover's title, and the vocals were recorded in the Grand Hotel.^[13]

Because of the incident and the exposure Montreux received when "Smoke on the Water" became an international hit, Deep Purple formed a lasting bond with the town. The song is honoured in Montreux by a sculpture along the lake shore (right next to the statue of Queen frontman Freddie Mercury) with the band's name, the song title, and the riff in musical notes. The new casino in Montreux displays notes from the riff as decoration on its balustrade facing the gambling hall.