

Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner

written and performed by Warren Zevon

Roland was a warrior from the Land of the Midnight Sun
With a Thompson gun for hire, fighting to be done
The deal was made in Denmark on a dark and stormy day
So he set out for Biafra to join the bloody fray

Through sixty-six and seven they fought the Congo war
Fingers on their triggers, knee-deep in gore
For days and nights they battled the Bantu to their knees
They killed to earn their living and to help out the Congolese

Roland the Thompson gunner...

His comrades fought beside him - Van Owen and the rest
But of all the Thompson gunners Roland was the best
So the CIA decided they wanted Roland dead
That son-of-a-bitch Van Owen blew off Roland's head

Roland the headless Thompson gunner (Time, time, time
For another peaceful war
Norway's bravest son But time stands still for Roland
'Til he evens up the score)
They can still see his headless body stalking through the night
In the muzzle flash of Roland's Thompson gun
In the muzzle flash of Roland's Thompson gun

Roland searched the continent for the man who'd done him in
He found him in Mombassa in a barroom drinking gin
Roland aimed his Thompson gun - he didn't say a word
But he blew Van Owen's body from there to Johannesburg

Roland the headless Thompson gunner...

The eternal Thompson gunner, still wandering through the night
Now it's ten years later but he still keeps up the fight
In Ireland, in Lebanon, in Palestine and Berkeley
Patty Hearst heard the burst of Roland's Thompson gun
And bought it