Yusuf/Cat Stevens opens up about his conversion
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The singer who rose to fame as Cat Stevens, and is now known as Yusef/Cat Stevens, is getting candid about his conversion to Islam and the fallout that ensued.

On Sunday, the 72-year old musician • born Steven Demetre Georgiou to a Swedish mother and Greek Cypriot father • appeared on the BBC 4 radio program Desert Islands Discs to discuss his life, including the 1976 near-death experience that resulted in him turning to the Muslim faith.

•I was an Englishman, • he told radio host Lauren Laverne of nearly drowning in Malibu, Calif. •I didn•t know it wasn•t wise to go out at that time of day and take a swim, so I did.

•I decided to turn back and head for shore and, of course, at that point I realized, •I•m fighting the Pacific. • There was no way I was going to win. There was only one thing to do and that was to pray to the almighty to save me. And I did.

•I called out to God and he saved me. A little wave came from behind. It wasn•t big. It was just simply pushing me forward. •The tide somehow had changed and I was able to get back to land. So I was saved. I didn•t know what was going to happen next. •

Following the incident, Stevens • who had already explored Buddhism while battling tuberculosis as a teen • was given a copy of the Qur•an by his brother.

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