

Summary Information

Repository: Walter P. Reuther Library

Author: Steve "Muruga" Booker

Title: Steve "Muruga" Booker" 12/2/2015

Description: Complete Audio File, mp3
Transcript

Identifier: UP002669

Language: English, some Serbian

Access: Restrictions apply

Summary: Steve "Muruga" Booker is a Detroit-born drummer who played with a variety of important musicians throughout the 60s, 70s, and 80s. This oral history details how he got into music, as well as his rise in the 1960s with the Low Rocks and the Thunder Rocks. He also played with a variety of important musicians from the time period.

Cite as: Steve "Muruga" Booker 12/2/2015 Oral history Interview, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

Subjects: Steve Booker
Muruga Booker
Detroit Music 1960s
The Supremes
John Lee Hooker
Record Hop
The Thunder Rocks
The Low Rocks
The Chessmate Bar
Record Hops

Transcript

M- My name is Steven Thomas Bookvich (spells it out), then as you'll see in the story, later it changed to Steve Booker (spells it out). And then later in the story it changed to Muruga Booker (spells it out). And then later on it got to be Priest Steven. The Least. I am The Least.

N- Now if you could tell me about where and when you were born?

M- I was born in Detroit, Michigan. Uh. 1942. Uhm... It was around the war time. That was all in the air. Um. The... the bubble gum cards had war planes and bubble gum. *laugh*

N- For the Kids.

M- Yeah. Right?

N- Um. Where in Detroit did you live?

M- Okay, I lived. Um. When I was born I was born on Klinger Street. Right off Davidson – which is the first freeway of Detroit. The first freeway of the World! Because Ford built it to uh run his cars. It was eventually the first thing that went from Detroit to Chicago. It was the Davison freeway, right? And uhm uh, that is right next to Hamtramck. And then I moved to Gerardin when I was five. And that is right around Harper Mower. And then I moved to Sunset. And then when I was uh, you know, 6. And then we moved to Bloom Street uh when I was ten. And I lived there on and off except going on the road and things like that with, you know, my family uh till '85. Cuz my parents got divorced so if I came back to Detroit I would be staying at Ma's house and my room was always there. And that's where I started playing the Drums.

But on Sunset street is where I saw my dad play the accordion in the uhm uhm kitchen. And he was playing the chromatic accordion Serbian style and I would dance the Kolo, Serbian Kolo, with my mother. Circle Dance. And I would see the rhinestones on the accordion. And I knew I wanted to be a musician. Just the beauty of the music and dancing and hearing the music. And then it was right there in the kitchen. And then my mother a few days later put a pencil in my hand and drew a stick figure. And I said "Ma, That's um not the way you do it. People are not like sticks."

And I knew at the age of three, that's what it was, that I was going to be a musician and an artist for the rest of my life. At the age of six, I met Misha Bishkof who had the Warsaw music store in Hamtramck, Michigan. And my dad studied accordion with him. Jean Krupa, the famous drummer to play with Benny Goodman, came and uh studied with Misha. Misha uh was uh a Jewish immigrant from Russia and he knew how to play the accordion, he knew how to play the drums, he could make instruments. He could make an accordion. He could make a drum or a tambourine. He taught me how to skin, right now drummers go to buy plastic hats. But Misha taught me how to skin the drum, the calfskin. And that's a whole art that you use with um uh a bent knife. And it's like a hook. And you have to wet the skin and keep it till you really uh pliable. And you have a wooden hoop. And then and then you have clothespins that clamp. So then you tuck one under, put the clothespin on. Then the other side of the hoop, pull that tight and you keep on going from you know right left from other side to other side

until you have tugged the whole skin. That's a whole lost art. People don't even have a concept of doing that unless they're aboriginal you know drummers. You know Still having that tradition.

And Misha even had a ten-foot accordion and he would even go up and down on a ladder and his wife would pull and it was on wheels, you see. He had he had the the drums in the back room. And he had a place where he made accordions and fixed accordions and made instruments. And his house, and his apartment was upstairs. But on the counter he had a bed, you know like a mat, and so when he was tired he would rest on the mat. His wife would have to ring him you know to go, you know, to go up and eat.

He was a real musician. And one day at the age of six, I started playing accordion with him. And then, uhm, and that went till the age of about 14 into 15. And see Misha had that drum set back there A big 26-inch bass drum with with uh some wood blocks from china because he toured through red china, you know, in a circus in klesber band. And uh, and he didn't have no saxophone. He had a snare drum. A big 26-inch bass drum and there was a little symbol on the side of the bass drum with an extra uh hammer that came from the uh peddle of the bass drum that would hit the symbol. So he would hit the boom and the ting at the same time. Boom duh ting ting boom duh duh duh. Like that. And uh that was where he would keep time and this guy could uhm uh he could play with five or six sticks at the same time. You know. He would, you know, he taught Krupa how to do that. The flipping and all that. . The foot ting and all of that. But that uh when Krupa went to those tribal rhythms with Benny Goodman. See Misha taught him that. That comes from Klesbmer. Bum tikka tikka bum tikka bum bum tikka ting tikka tikka bum. Those beats became Krupa's tribal beats. But they were really the Klesmer and Russian beats and the Bulgarian beats. You see of the Bulgarian toupan. Boom tikka boom bom tikka boom boom. Right?

N- What's a toupan?

M- Toupan

N- Yeah

M- It's the Bulgarian toupán. And the Serbians play it. You know the Slavs and the Russians uh you know. Lot of people play that. And it has an uh uhm a mouth on one side and switch on the other. Boom tick tack tack Boom tick tack tack Boom tick tack tack right? and um so I was raised with all of that kind of stuff. When I started um. When I got to the point of being uh hhm around 14. I started seeing the signs. You they were changing. Rock and roll was coming in. Blues blues first was coming. I was hearing you know in the in the I am right in the border of Hamtramck in Detroit and I have a little radio and I am hearing jolly hooker playing the blues and muddy water playing the blues and bo diddly. Boom tikka boom boom boom. You know? Woooooah man! This stuff is really energetic and awesome! I gotta get into this kind of stuff! And I started to seeing signs that accordion players go to hell. And I've been playing accordion since the age of 6 to 14, right? And uh oh wow. You know? Accordion players go to hell. You know. Or they go to jail. Right? So I says that's a sign. You know. I'm listening to Johnny Cash. And I am trying to play Johnny cash on the accordion and I don't know and it's not making. I said I gotta change. I gotta change change my attention. You know? What the heck is going on here? You know. And um So at the at the time my friend was a drummer in a group called the Debonairs. His name was Jim Carty. He he he's a famous Detroit magician too. If you haven't done him yet you should do him. He is from the Detroit wheels. What he was playing drums. And I saw him do a drum solo. I said I really like that. And then I met Nole in school and I'm doing at the record hop the sock hop you know in in the doo wop and in rock rock bands are playing. And I realized it when I am dancing that you know my feet are hitting the same when I dance what my the feet part is hitting the bass drum in the soxable and when I'm clapping my hands like that it's like the symbol and the soxable of the drum set. And and I for two weeks I says I gotta figure out a different instrument rather than accordion. So for two weeks I didn't think of anything else. That's all I says I am not going to ponder an idea except what instrument do I want to play. And I be on the swings love me tender love me I'm not going to be a singer.

So I saw Jim play and I realized that at the dance and then I went uh um to the Likert armory you know and I saw the low rocks play. There was two three thousand chicks screaming. I says "I gotta be a drummer." So I go to Misha "I want to play drums." So then he started teaching me drums. And on my fourth lesson I played with Misha uh it was uh a a a cross a a a above __Yemans ?_ in Hamtramck. And um uh there was a Russian party going on upstairs. And uh uh actually it was a communist Russian party. Right? Having a banquet right? And I am going upstairs and I am seeing this here signs. And I become scared. Now I become scared. He says don't worry they're just Russians he says don't tell em that you know

anything. You're gonna have a lot of vodka and good food and we are gonna play music and that that's it. And you get paid at the end of the night. Right?

N- How did you get the gig?

M- Cuz my fourth lesson with Misha he plays accordion. But also the drums. So he was my accordion teacher. So he taught me the rhythms and on my fourth lessons I knew all the rhythms of all of the songs. The Polka. The Waltz. The Foxtrot. The Cha Cha. You know the uh Sambas. The Tangos. You know. All the different songs. Right. Those days you know there wasn't really rock like you had to know how to play all the world musics. Right? So I knew how to do that in on my fourth lesson he had me back him up. He got the gig!

N- Okay...

M- Right? Cuz he was famous. Everybody was hiring him. He wasn't a communist. But you know he sorta like knew it was. while I was really surprised at the lady down the down the store uh who had a grocery store down the block from my father's store. She was at the communist meeting! (laughs) this was a time in the 50's you could go to jail for something like that. Ok but the Russians have a lot of chutzpa and Misha let me do a drum solo and I did a drum solo. I blew them away. They were throwing money at me and giving me whiskey and bring more food up to me. I was like woah I like this. That one point right there gave me the impotence to keep on going. I was 13 or 14 and I am 73 still playing right? Still playing. Still searching. still striving for even more. Cuz you never should know that you know everything. You don't. Then you're a fool. You see. So that kept me going.

Well, now I go to the Big Boy's. And I'm at Big Boy's. And uh my friend comes over and he says "you remember the group the Low Rocks that you saw at the Likert Armory,"

I say "Yeah, I love them man"

He says "they're having a party down the block. Want to go bust it?"

"Yeah let's go bust the party." We didn't even know them, right? So It was just down the block. We were on 8 Mile, you see. You know Eminem talks about 8 Mile and being north of 8 Mile is the hard. No I am from 6 and Davidson. That's the harder part. Haha right? 6 and Davidson. Haha yeah yeah That that's south. you know? Back in the olden days you see. Why I I fight for freedom why I got the voices for peace award from Hiroshima. You know, Why? Back in the olden days there were signs. Where where the African Americans were having to make signs that our goal is to live north of 8 Mile road. Well that's where Eminem lives. (Laughs) No, that was haha their goal. That was the good part! We were in the part that they wanted to get out of and go over there. That's how racial and everything. You're raised in this climate of racialness and the climate of war. And all this You know. As a musician you know in those wartimes you're hearing you know all of the McGuire Sisters and everybody singing their songs and all of this which brought a a uplifting to a wartime. You know? So now we go crash the party. While we knock on the door and door gets blown open. BLAAM and this guy comes running out "later with you guys! I quit the band!"

He's the drummer: Gary Ess. I walked downstairs and soon as I go downstairs I hear Hank, you know from the Low Rocks say "is there a drummer in the house!?" I say "I've just arrived." He says "well! Sit down play." And I play and I got accepted into the band. I wasn't even playing the whole year yet. Right? And uh uh uh but how I got the drums see just a little bit before this how I got the drums is I am over at my friend's house, Robert Prednick and he had a bike with a racer uh siren on it and a speedometer. Now this is the time where I'm trying to tell my dad that I don't want to play the accordion anymore. He wants to be the accordionist and I'm trying to tell him I want to be a drummer. He ain't going for it. Okay? So now I'm there at this house and I'm driving around to see how loud the siren will go at 30 miles an hour. And my dad says!

Stop!

I says No I didn't reach my goal yet.

He says You Stop!

I didn't reach my goal yet!! And I kept on going to see if I could go faster, you know at 14. He starts chasing me, he can't catch me. And I'm laughing and I come back. "Get off the bike." We are about a mile away from my, our house. We drove. He says walk home. So I walk home. He comes driving after. Goes in the house. Gets my accordion. You didn't listen to me. I said yeah? I was just trying to see how loud it went at 30. I don't care. I told you to stop. You didn't listen to me. This is what happens when you don't listen to me. He takes my accordion and he throws it on the ground. He steps on it. And I looked at him. Thank you, Dad. Thank you. I didn't know how to tell you that I didn't want to play that. I want to play the drums. You come in the house with a set of drums? you? And if your mother lets you in? You're both out. Right?

So now that doesn't stop me. I enroll with Mr. Teenie and Rex Hall in Persing High School.

N- Uh who is Mr. Teenie?

M- Uh Ray Teenie? You know He was the uh uh uh Music Instructor. He's a famous musician you know, from town. Teenie. I think his son or grandson is Dennis Teenie. Right? And um Rex Hall played drums I think in the Detroit Symphony. So He was very regimental and I would even teach you a drumroll on a pillow. Where there is no bounce. Right? So I had that real strictness there, right? in the school and the real looseness at home, (haha) you know? Right? And so I'm already studying there and I'm telling Misha "man I want to learn how to play drums from you." Right? So Misha goes to my father. He says "Booker." He says "You like your mother?" he says "no I can't stand her." He says "Why?"

He says "Because she was rich, she had a nightclub. And the famous accordionist, Shiko who played there in Serbia uhm he drank and liked to get high" and she says uh and "I want to play the accordion. " and she's "no you will never play the accordion because those guys get high all time." "So she never let me play so I had to become a shoe maker dammit I wanted to become a drummer, I mean, an accordion player!" right? "So I can't stand her for not letting me learn in my young years. Now I'm trying to learn in my old years and it's harder. "

Misha looks at him "So you want your son to hate you just like that?" and my dad goes "What?"

He says "Well you don't like your son, your mother didn't let you play accordion. You're not letting him play the drums."

That day I came home from school and I knocked on the door and I looked through the window and I saw a practice pad and a set of sticks on the table. And I couldn't believe my eyes. He said "okay you can be a drummer!" "You want your drums now or at Christmas? It is October." I say "now!" okay. So I got a big set of 26-inch bass drum from Gazope's music on 8 Mile, right? And a snare drum. And a little symbol, right? And uh I go and spray paint it green. And the skins were old and nasty and my dad was a shoe maker and I took white spray shoe spray and sprayed the skins so they looked brand new and white. They were very old, right? So it looked like a spiffy old set of drums just like what Misha had, right? And then I meet the Low Rocks. Bam. So now we're playing record house, Pomplay, Likert Armory. It's rock and roll in Detroit. You know? Remember Bill Haley and The Comets. They they were in Highland park. You see. And the whole whole and the whole feeling of Rockabilly down the block from my house was the Caravan Bar. The same time. I am giving you the feeling of the same time. Around there is the Caravan bar. They used to let all the first country bands and then all of sudden country bands were turning into this thing called Rockabilly. And the rockabilly bands were turning into rock and roll bands. I went "wow" Now I was sneaking in there and the guy knew me. Marvin Derryberry and I was underage 18,16,17,18 right? And he was letting me come into the Caravan bar. And I was also painting, I was also earning a living while I was playing rock and roll as a side painter. Because I was doing art, right? So I would sign paint, earn a living, and then play rock and roll and and and so he'd let me come in and listen to the Rockabilly bands and I would sit in with them. I mean the bomb guys from Nashville and everything. Who knows who they are. The best ones were slide guitars, banjos, guitars, fiddles, the whole thing, and I'm playing drums and sitting in with these guys are giving me a chance to play.

N- Any names stick out to you?

M- Uh no no, but the rock band right after that came in was was uh Smokey um and I think it was Smokey and the flames or something like that. And this guy named Norm Ray was playing in the band saxophone who came from Hamtramck and norm ray um was the one who changed me from Bookvich to Booker. Because who's gonna book a Bookvich. Okay? You're just a honky. There was prejudiced on that. So let's call you Booker.

N- So was they were specifically not looking for white sounding names?

M- They were not looking for a honky, I was Serbian.

N- Oh Gotcha. Hungari- Gotcha

M- We were just all DPs, Displaced People. You know we were uh uh uh treated just like the Blacks were. And I saw that. Right? And all around they're at gas stations that you know were a lot of guys from down and they couldn't stand them Negroes you see. you know. so it was prejudiced. I was raised in that. And but from youth I was going to the orthodox church. And so from youth I knew that prejudiced was not right. And from youth I saw that god was in everybody. So that like really saved me. But I'm living in the prejudiced. You're living in that. You're living all around that. And rock and roll was a way to um break through barriers you see. So you know I started uh jamming with all of these different people and norm ray and I got to be with him and that was um uh the El Dorados who Dick Wagner just passed. Was the guitar player there. That comes a little bit later. So now I'm with the low rocks and we're playing this record house. And uh we we get a manager. Gordy Prince and Jerry Lucorsier. Gordy prince is behind a lot of the hip hop stuff now and Jerry Lucorsier passed away a little while ago but he was a became the pres the vice president or president of A&M Canada. But they uh at the time but at the time they were the promo men for Motown. Jerry Lucorsier and uh um uh Gordy Prince who was the son of Grand Prince and Grand Prince was a big producer and promoter in the Detroit area also responsible for uh I mean he wrote arrangements for Guy Lombardo and people like that he flowed those guys he landed their airplane in a cornfield or someone's airplane in a cornfield. He was responsible for exciting the idea of airports being all around you know, Grand Prince. He was my real mentor; you know this guy. And and he he had us playing with another group, the show offs when Harry Jark came from Super Sales' show. So here we are with these guys and uh we uh they said look at there are parents, chip in 250 buck each. 25 people. We will record them; we will put the record out. And they were the guys who took Motown's records to all of the radios and got them in distributions. So the name of the game and trick of that is that when someone is already doing that, you let 'em do you too. So they took we did an album, a rec, a song and we recorded it and it was called Blueberry Jam but it came from Fastamano's Blueberry Hill. (hum) and we went (intense humming) we sped it up, we add tenor saxes, guitar bass and

drums. The Low rocks. Our rocks were the lowest. We used to battle the thunder rocks. Their rocks thundered. And we used to battle of the bands, that's what we used to yell "We are the low rocks and our rocks are the lowest!!" (intense vocal imitation of rock music) "We are the thunder rocks and our rocks thunder" (more intense vocal imitation of rock music) And you know we'd be going but that was the spook they eventually produced us and put the record out on their labels records. So we were an indie label in '58, 9 (cackle)

N- Oh man, didn't know those existed!

M- UH HUH uh huh! We were were were we were existing. Yep. And we had a hit in five states. Number 1 on the charts! Okay. Number one on the charts.

(plays music) So this is the Low Rocks

N- oh! Okay.

M- Haha right?

I am 15 or sixteen right

N- Yeah wow that's insane. And your parents were okay with this?

(turns off music)

M- Our parents were okay they invested the 250, but still the pressures existed, didn't it? And Motown wanted us. And even went and made a um uh demo. And uhm they wanted us! We had a hit!

N- Quick question: How many of the band were uh eastern European?

M- (Inhale) well he's Italian, he's Italian, he's Henry Carazza his family come from the south, and um David Kish geez I don't know what Kish would be. He ended up being a men in black. Yeah.

N- Like a government guy?

M- Yeah

N- Oh okay!

M- Yeah he won't tell me about. He can- I ask him if there's flying saucers? Aliens? He says he can't talk about this stuff. (laughs)

N- Oh ho, fancy.

M- Fancy? He's all I can tell you is that you might be talking to me on the phone. And then I'll call you two days later you'll already think that I was at where I was but I already have gone to Europe and Back.

So that record is out there and it's a hit. We're playing for Tom Clay. Tom Clay, he's the one that got busted for payola for Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini. But that is where we got our start with Tom Clay over there. We're playing opposite Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks had 40 days (hum) you know; the hawks became the band for Dylan. Right? And so we were playing opposite Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks, opposite the 18-year-old Ann Margaret, Frog Man Hendry. The Supremes. We taught the Supremes weren't punk'd out enough because they were lip syncing their records. That's how our language went. Ah they ain't punk'd out enough, we're a live band, we're punk'd out. They're lip-syncing their record. We're playing live. Right?

And so uhm the Low Rocks were playing the record hops all around. We were among the first garage bands uhm punky garage rock bands in Detroit. You know 1958 and 9. We were doing that. And there was um uh... uh the magz Metro Magazine. They have us in the Roots of Music in Detroit. You know? Right? just above John Lee Hooker. Right? So then that really got me going and knowing that I could uh you know Now I'm going to Big Boy's, from raiding the party, I'm going to Big Boy's having a Big Boy in my car and every car is playing my record. Right? And I'm driving down the street and hearing my record coming out of people's houses. That's elevating thing that you just can't even experience. You can't ever explain it to somebody. They're they won't let you out of the hall. You got to crawl out of the bathroom window. They're pulling your pants off while you're trying to get to the car. "I got his shirt!" "No, I got his pants!" You know I uh you know that kind of a craze. It was that craze for Elvis for everybody it was going on anybody that was doing that was like happening we experienced that. You know, playing the record house. But we were playing this record hop for free. You see So ain't nobody paying us to do Record hops. And then we don't even know where the money went. For the record. We never got paid!

N- Could you describe what a record hop is?

M- A record hop is in the beginning when rock and roll first came out. It came from the Boogie Woogie and the Charleston and the Boogie Woogie and then now it's all of a sudden it's a record hop. Well first it was sock hops and sock hops was when uh you know had a dance at the school and it was in the gymnasium and they didn't want you scuffling up the floor, so they made you take off your shoes and you had to dance with your socks. So we called that a sock hop. And then sock hop uh what were they doing? Were the bands there? No. They were maybe lip syncing their record or the DJ was playing records. So that sock hop got taken out into the Likert Armory into Dairy's Worker's hall and you could wear shoes got called the Record hop.

N- Oh okay, gotcha.

M- Right?

N- Gotcha.

M- And so you were going to the record hops, right? And that was where you would dance and that's where you would meet people and dance it was the rave of the day. Right? People were dancing. It was big to dance. It was big to listen to the music. And we got that band live. It was really something. So then. Uh. Then the Low Rocks broke up and I ended up with the Thunder rocks.

N- Why did the Low Rocks break up?

M- Well Dave Kish wanted to get married. (laugh) He had to go get a real job. Something like that. Well. He ended up getting a bigger job than that. He's working for the government. Well I love every one of them. They're all my bros. You know. And but that broke up the band. We figured that, you know, the band was the band. If it breaks up we're not going to go this way that trying to save we're the same band. So we just never did anything. But I ended up the thunder rocks always had um different drummers playing with them. And Pat LeRose was in the Thunder Rocks, a great guitar player, he can go from west Montgomery to Jen Atkins to Jimmy Hendrix and beyond all of that. He was a really great Guitarist and so I saw that so I latched onto wanting to play with him. I joined the Thunder Rocks. Then the Thunder Rocks uh from the Thunder Rocks uh we were enterprising even with the low rocks. See we were getting our own sock hops. Renting a big roller derby hall, right. And having a playing live and hiring the DJ the Lee Allen, different people like that to come and be our DJ. So we find this place, the Walled Lake Casino, and it's uh in Walled Lake, across from Walled Lake amusement park. It's got a little restaurant, the Band box. So now we talk to people there into letting us throw record hops and rock concerts at the walled lake casino.

And uhm I know the Beach Boys were out, you know, all of that kind of stuff, we're living in back of the beach house on the beach at the Walled Lake casino as the band. We got rooms back there. We got army cots. And we're camping out in the beach house. And we're selling the pop corn and pop and potato chips in the beach house. And selling um lockers and we're playing live on the beach. Right? Influence of the Beach boys. We're playing live on the beach, right?

And uh um. And then. On the weekend, we're playing the Walled Lake Casino. Which is where Krupa, Benny Goodman, all of these people used to come you know it used to be the big concert hall but now we turned it into a big rock hall. Right? And so then we said to the Kramers who owned the place, "Hey! why don't you let us have a DJ come in here and he will play some records too in between our sets? And he will be advertising on the radio. That's the way you did. Let him say 'hey I'll be on the Walled Lake Casino and the low- thunder rocks will be there!' And then he would get people like The Supremes, The Contours." Which uh I backed uh Contours up on one Record uh uh Pat LaRose was on their hit I love you. And all of that was going on, see Motown and all of this here. I would be playing Bar Mitzvahs at the time, you know I met this one guy that says "Oye Vey I could have invested in that Barry Gordy in that there Motown 'cept for my wife who said don't do it. Now look at now he has got The Supremes the Ste" you know and all of this and he says "I missed out!" That was the atmosphere. You know like you could entrepreneur the music, it was the beginning, Detroit was a haven for music and art and creativity. And invention. It was the place in the universe! Detroit what should really really be proud of this here and all kinds of stuff was going on. You know? But um here we are playing at the Walled Lake casino. And um. We're backing up all the acts and now they say, hey, we want you to back up this young boy. We say uh who. This is little Steve Wonder. So, oh okay. So we gotta carry his organ up the thing to put it on the opposite stage. We're gonna do the battle of the bands. This is what we do. Well with

Del Shannon and Johnny and the Hurricanes. So we had a battle of the bands: The Thunder Rocks with little Stevie Wonder and the uh Johnny and the Hurricanes with Del Shannon. And you know it was it was basically we play a song, they play a song, we play a song they we were going back and forth to see who gets the most applause you know?

N- Yeah

M- And that was a really fun thing and so uh we got the thing going but the DJ was able to get all sorts of people to come there for free. You know. And one day you know in the in the place um this guy, I was dating this girl and 'round the beach house and um he jumped me and he was gonna take a knife in in uh pull it on me. You know? And He was reaching for like for a knife. Well my cousin, Roy, who they call Blackie who got into yoga and later became Ramu, he taught me, he was in the army, and he taught me jujitsu. So This guy goes to do the knife, well I learned a way of flipping the guy by head by flipping over me putting his head in a headlock and hauling him around there. And uh uh you know, um, I just got him on the

ground real quick and I said "leave me alone." And I got up. Well they used that as an excuse to kick me out. To kick me out of the band to kick me out of the thing. The DJ, they used that as an excuse. But why? We were the band that was in power. We started the record hop.

N- Oookay...

M- So they got rid of they got rid of me. And by getting grid of me, then one by one they start you know they got rid of the whole band. Then um Lee Allen at the time, uh that's the atmosphere that I felt. You know Other people could have seen it a little different but that's what I sort of felt. Uh cuz they were gonna get us a record contract, right? Cuz we started all of this and we already had a couple hit records and thunder rocks had "What's the word? Thunder Bird! What's the joy, Nature Boy!" (Hums intensely). It was a big hit! A early garage rock hit. A punk hit. And uh so we we worked ourselves up to backing up Steve Wonder, having the record house, playing there, all of a sudden I'm kicked out, the band's kicked out, and all of a sudden you see another band there – Billy Lee and the Rivieras. And they get the record contract that we were working for. And that turned out to be M Riders and the Detroit Wheels?. Right there at the Walled Lake casino. Lee Allen.

That's my view of what I sort of saw. I mean the guitar player of the Detroit Wheels was Jim McCarty who was the drummer that changed to guitar and I saw play earlier. Right? And it made me want to play drums.

N-Oh Okay

M- Right?

N-Yeah

M- So Jim was always my friend so I didn't even say nothing about all of this. Cuz they are all too much my friends. You know what I mean? So you know I can I can be an illusion. Haha you know so but what we felt, you know,

N- But that's probably not that bands fault, the management –

M- Yeah yeah yeah it was the management and the Kramers and the saying "Okay Get them get them out of uh so we don't have to pay them."

N- Cuz everyone else is playing for free.

M- Yeah so uh whatever band they get they record contract from they can start the record comps. So they don't have to give them any percentage of that.

N- Ohhh gotcha.

M- You see? Boom boom. right? You know if we were the band that started the record hops, the band that got the Disk Jockey, the band that played the record and got the hit record, then we'd be uh really big into how much money we were making from that place. We don't want that? Right?

Unfortunately I think if people see that they should give more to the musicians and be fair and uh be equal, that uh they are gonna get a lot more for themselves and a lot more out of the musicians. We need equality, that's, I'm fighting for that.

So that was a point of our life that uh uh we early rock and roll thing and I started... um.. do you have any questions?

N- I was just gonna ask uh where did you go from there?

M- So, uh, it's at at the same time, you know Pat and I, you know I was doing this big wall sign and uh I think it just mentioned you know this Twain v deacon, he was uh an insurance man and he was really far out, he instilled just something in us that you know that really uh you know he he would hypnotize us and teach us how to go inside ourselves you know and one time he says come on he says I am just going to take you to uh to Saint Louis. We are going to drive to saint Louis and back. I gotta see someone there. Tie up a deal, and come right back.

So we were going there, he says bring your instruments.

N- You and the entire band?

M- Bass, guitar, and drums.

N- Okay.

M- We put it all in the you know I I I I just had a small drum set you know, guitar and bass, so he had a big Cadillac. Right? So we squeezed it all in, just enough for all of us to jam a little bit, not the whole thing. Right. And we go into a restaurant bar. And um we we seat us at a table and he's dressed up real well, like he you know shirts and like kinda Dwain V Deacon he would have us uh bring dessert and he would walk over to the bar and he says "how you doing Steven, recognize my boys?" he said "oh uh yeah" "he says yeah they were on Tv" "oh yeah yeah yeah! Oh yeah" "we weren't" (laughs!)

He was just saying that. Right? Before you know it we're getting free dinner. Before you know it they're saying "won't you jam for us?" Before you know it we're jamming in the place and getting free dinners! You know. bam! Right. So he showed us something. Yeah yeah okay, he lied but he showed us how to weasel in and get in and get thing going in the you know we can

look like we are more than we are. You know? And a lot of that you know, in music is you know if you look the part you know you get accepted as well.

Er For instance uh I played with George Clinton for many years recording. And I'd go to the gigs but I would never dress up weird. I would just be going sort of like this. And then uh one day I said I'll just dress up like the P-funk do you know because I was weird anyways playing. I had George was producing me with Murugu and the Soda Jerks. So I was playing guitar instead of drums and put my wife on the drums. Right? And we were playing new wave music and 80. So I never got asked to sit in. One day I dressed weird and I went to George's gig and he said "oh you came dressed to play, wanna jam." Now this is after five years of him not asking me to play. It was all because of the way dressed in the gig. Well I should have put my djsal;fkj he didn't come to play. Right? So being dressed is an important thing

So then Pat and I said "we're going to uhm we heard about the um um the beach boys and everybody was saying, our friend curling was saying uh Bob Kurlick, we call him Curly... how great it is in California. So I was playing all kinds of um top 40 gigs and being known playing in a lot of bars and a double scale if you're doing this and that this is 1960 um uh four or five and we said <clap> "let's go to California!" and I had a uh Ford Falcon and uh I got my clothes and my drums and my Ford Falcon and he put his guitar and his clothes. I had a hundred and 20 and he had a hundred and 75. We were naive.

We got in the car and the first three days we were going through corn fields we thought it would never end and we thought we were going the wrong way. He and I was funny as heck. You know? And then we're um uh gonna go to California and make it and then we break down in Hammerroll, Texas. And we are in the Tottlehouse and the guy says "you know they're auditioning a band over there uh at five o'clock. Why don't you go over there at three or four and tell them you're the band" so we uh did and we went in and um and we said "we're the band, we came early." So he calls the owners, they came down to see us and we set up and while they were coming down Pat put the jukebox on and it was just guitar and drums and pat puts the jukebox on and learns about five or six songs that are on the jukebox. He is that quick, he can do just it, right? And So bam! You know We had those songs down. And So we start playing the songs on their jukebox, and our stuff, and everything else. They were loving us until the band came. And then the band comes in uhhh I said okay nothing but the truth. So we did Dun dun duh dun dun bing bing. Got up all of our things and "hi he says you ain't the band." "right, just before you say anything just listen. We don't want your job. We broke down, we're broke, out of gas and the car ain't working. We had no recourse but

to come here and say we were the band and won't you give us a gig? We just want to make enough money to get out and get the car gas." He says "woah, if that's all it is!" this place is called the nuthouse, bar, the nuthouse bar. Why? Because you got beers in spittoons and urinals.

Yeah! Right? Right? This is where we were, in rural Texas, you gotta understand. <spit sound> That beer and you know? You know? You getta you getta. Right? Yeah. And all of these medical things. Right it's The nuthouse! Right. So They said "okay! Put a shitter in front of the drum, the bass drum, the big pot that you take a crap in. right in the hospital, when the nurse lifts you up and says ok you know right? –"

N- A bed pan

M- Yeah A bed pan, ok so that's what you call it. I'm from the street you know <cackles> ok said the bed pan, right, puts that in front of the thing and he says "These (balls) are straying it, we're going to both play tonight! They're gonna play, we're gonna play, we're gonna give them our bass player to play with them and uh we're gonna play all night. We want you all to put money in that bed pan." Well 2-300 dollars, enough for gas, enough to fix the little thing on our car and we were out the next day. And we got to the top of Sandia Mountains and ran out of gas. And all there is to do is roll down. And we roll down into a church parking lot. And we told our story and the priest says "okay son, I'm going to send you to the Mexican restaurant here's 10 dollars for some gas, and I'm calling a guy" and he calls him and he says "I'm sending you two boys over, please put it on my tab, give them chili and some beans you know and you know whatever it is, you know hamburger and chili and uh put it on my tab. And so we went there <cough cough> big Mexican restaurant we have hot green chili and red chili <cough co-> It was fantastic yeah but the guy saw that the priest call us and we were parked in front of the restaurant right off of route 66 <laugh> because that's what we do route 66 get your kicks route 66 <cackle> we did that. Right!? So we're on on some street in route66 by the chili place that's what where we sleep overnight. In the car. Right? One day knocking on the window a guy wakes us up he says uh I hear you're stranded and you have no food and you have no money. no place to stay! Say yes sir! And he says Well come with me and we'll get you something to eat. And he takes us to a really cool you know Mexican Italian restaurant and just buys a dinner, both. He's sitting there, he's in a priest robe with a collar. Well I'm not a regular uh you know catholic priest or orthodox, he says what I am is uhm I'm a a yogi from uh the uh the uh uhm he was made a swami under the great swami

shivananda of rishakesha, a great doctor. Okay. So he says he says you know I've died. He says I was brought back to life but before I came back to life he says angelic forces gave me the truth and I came back to my life. Okay... He says see my death certificate? Showed 10 minutes right? Okay... It's a good meal, tell me about that! Right? Then he says, how would you like to come to stay with me? I will give you a place to stay until you get out. He says "I'm staying with EB ." Yeah uh He takes us to E Barton Moore who is a relative of Andrew Jackson.

And another guy is staying there, Bob or somebody who is uh no Bob was uh Reverend Bob and this other guy, forgot his name, but he was a drop out he was uh insurance, he got tired of it, he walked away from his whole family from all of life and he was like in Albuquerque New Mexico and they gave him a place to stay. And So they're all living there and ol' EB would come out and bring pictures of Andrew Jackson with the slaves in the in the cotton fields in the back. And he wrote this song: The victory march of the united nations. And he was playing it on old upright honkey tonk type of piano. (sings intelligibly).

Well... This was all blowing us away.

N- Where was this...?

M- In Albuquerque, New Mexico right on route 66. He lived on Route 66! You know so then in the nighttime the priest would take us, reverend bob, to all of the clubs. And we do what we learned from uh uh from uh Dwain V Deacon. How to go in a club, and the priest is over there saying "you kno they're stranded you see, you know, but they can really play good. What you wanna let them play! We can give 'em a meal yknow or he would go to somebody in the audience and say "how do you like the way those guys play. you know wonderful, I'm a priest trying to help 'em. They're stranded." The guy would buy all of us a dinner. Some of 'em would invite us to their house afterwards and get us some of us. They would give us a party. They'd even get us a joint. I mean they were giving us whiskey and wine and everything. A couple book here and there, helping us and we were surviving this way. You know as young kids in 1964. Right? And we would go to the jazz places, you know? And they'd say "East Coast jazz! East Coast Jazz! They would hear us playing and we'd be playing cuz he played like Wes Montgomery, Pat did." And so uh there while we were saying, he

taught us how to meditate and that there were other dimensions of life. And that's why I mention that story, it's important to music you see, see musicians play you can either play from your mind and emotions and your memory or you can play from the uh uh creative spiritual part of yourself that is uncreated and you co-create with the uncreated spiritual energies to create music through you. And this was even verified to me by even people like when I played with Jose Avenoe. He let the energy come through his head and out the fingers and you're transmitting you know divine energies and it was there that the divine energies were made aware to me. And then the union musicians, musicians union of Albuquerque New Mexico fixed our car! We had a blown rod. He fixed it!

And then we're going to now, then my old girlfriend, because I broke up with the chick and that also helped with want to leave town, right? And so they talked me into coming back, pat and I. So we're coming back, all of a sudden we start using oil, we started using bulk oil I remember a movie, about I think it was Edison or something, where they had to have an operation and there was no light so he took mirrors in front of candles and shined the light onto the body so the doctor could operate. We are in the middle of the desert, running out of oil, it's leaking a quart every ten miles or so. And so and so I remember that movie there was no light, no flashlight, so we opened the hood and we couldn't see where to put it in. I said remember the movie, I said give me the bottom of the oil can, turn the lights on, and I put the lights onto the uh uh the lights from the car shine on my oil can and I reflected the light into the things so he could see where to put it. I mean right? All of these things are very important to become inventive for musicians. These are things that take you to another other levels you know. And so we got back and we got all the ...we were going through the gas stations and getting the throwaway bulk oil. That you know right. And they were giving it to us by gallons. We had twenty gallons of oil in our car you know boom boom boom boom boom. So we could make it all across and we went all the way to Peoria, about three miles away from my grandmother's house that I had met only once in my life. And it was there that we stayed and we saw the group that did tequila and we uh the chants and something like that and we saw that in person. And so that all impregnated all of this here the consciousness of you know the guys that did tequila, the early rock and roll guys and we came back to Detroit and I started working at the Walled Lake, it was called uh, Maple Lanes.

And maple lanes uh for a while I had Steve Booker and the Bookends and we had the page five we were playing there you know. Uh At first there were a lot of bikers, so uh the guy wanted you know to have dinner and everything so we said okay we will show you how to get rid of the bikers and get a higher elite crowd and we'll even get the mayor coming here.

So we went in and when the bikers were there we started playing society music *hums* and I used to play society gigs so I know to really schpeel it on *hums* all the things we said we wouldn't do, we did *hums* you know right? And these bikers just couldn't stand it and they left. And then we started playing rock and roll. But you know we played dinner music for dinner and after that we played rock and then um by that time I met a place I went to this place called the Chessmate and the Chessmate was a just Chessmate coffee house run by Maury Whinebock. Very famous in Detroit in the 60s right across from University of Detroit 6mile and Livernois. And at the Chessmate they were just playing chess and had a really cool jazz band, um, playing very mild jazz. And uh they let me sit in and I did a drum solo and I got a standing ovation from everybody playing chess. The owner said why don't you come here and in the evening and do drum solos. And uh he said You got a band? And so we we got to be the house band. And I would do drumsolos, 3-4 a night.

N- Who was in your band?

M- With with my band.. well Pat LeRose the guitar player was in my band and uh well and just before that really uh uh happened when I came back from Albuquerque I played with Mr. Grand prince I said the Showoffs with Harry Jarkee and we played Springfield Illinois. And we were playing there. So we played the show offs and he showed me how to get yourself in the paper, get yourself on the radio, get yourself on TV, get yourself on posters, get yourself seen here how to get yourselves seen there. He taught me all the ropes of promoting a band. And Grand Prince was just a real genius at there. But we wanted to play jazz. So we were earning a living playing the show band, the show offs. So we would go to church's bar and play jazz on Saturday afternoons. At Church's bar across the street from our hotel. We were in Springfield Illinois, I mean you know this is the land of Lincoln, you know uhh the energies were really fabulous.

You go down and get yourself a haircut, downstairs, a guy had a Stradivarius and everyone in the classical symphony would come to get a haircut there and I'd hear the Stradivarius getting played while I was getting a haircut. You know that kind of stuff. So then I go to Church's bar and Church says hey my bro just came out of jail, you know he was in jail for smoking reefer you know and he's really a cool guy and this guy he played with Charlie Parker, he played with Sandy Kenton, you know, played with Claude Thornhill, Woody Herman, Stan Gatz. He played with ummm the um uh oh god it's the uhm the Kingsman. What was that? Louie Louie? He played with them even, they used to let him just jam. So here's this guy who's

about in his 40s, you know 40 45 and he meets us and we're wanting to play jazz you now? And he says wow, you know and he loved us and we were really young and wanting to play jazz and learn it. He started mentoring us in jazz. And, you know, he played with Charlie Parker, he, he, he played with all those people. Matter of fact he told he Charlie Parker's horn was in hock, uhh you know to get some heroin so he needed a horn to play salt peanuts and he borrowed his horn. You know that's the legend that I heard, you know? And umm, Pat Bowlby used to uhhh tell me all about Ike Day from Chicago who was a great drummer. One of the first who stopped using the Bass drum on a one-two-three-four tsk-tsk-tsk. He stopped using that and he started comping with it boom-tsk-tsk. Comping, doing accents with the bass drum, leaving it more open instead of boom-boom-boom-boom, right? And so, Ike Day and Miles Davis used to come and listen to him play. And Stan Gets, they'd go back to New York and tell Max you gotta listen to Ike over there. You know, this guy is another drummer, right? So Ike Day, one of the guys, they should, you should, research this dude. He's, you know, there's not much on him. But, that, Bowlby would tell me about that style. And he would take me to meet all of these guys like Art Mardigan, who's another famous drummer in Detroit you should see. And umm uhhh he had me playing good time and, and cooking. Right? I mean one time he had me cooking so hard the whole band, that I felt like I was levitating. You know? So-

N- What's cooking?

M- Cooking is grooving.

N- Ah! gotcha

M- See? Its grooving. You know, like umm Im not just running, man. But I'm into it.

N- When you sort of-

M- Yea, and you get into the oneness. You forget that you're playing and you're just playing. Right? And he got me into that. Right? You gotta cook, bro. You know? And that's him, right

there. He said you gotta look, you gotta look knitty. He'd make me ten minutes late because he was combing his hair. But you gotta- its ok if you're late for a few minutes. He says you can't go there if you don't look right. Ha-ha-ha! You know, right? We'd be smoking reefer, you know, and getting ready to go to the gig. That was a big chore, you know? I mean, uh, you gotta get ready to do the gig. I wrote a song called Bopping with Bowlby because he was in the car from gig to gig. And he would teach me things. Well, if the fat tempo is too fast, then half-time it. That's all. If It's going 1-2-3 if it's too fast for you to play 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4 you see?

N- Uh-huh

M- Grab the half-time and you get your anchor

N- Ooo I gotcha

M- Now from the half-time you doubletime easily. Cause you're not, you're adding to half instead of trying to keep up with the fast. You dont think of it as I'm joining the fast- duh-duh-duh- youre going – da-da-da- so then you get the- dudududu- BAH- Right? You see? You can double time from the half so youre comfortable. Bam-dun-dun. Psychology of playing music. You know? If you, you know, if the band is dragging push forward- ka-ching ka-ching. If the band is speeding up hold back- cha-un cha-un- you know, pull, there's certain accents that hold the band, that bring the band back and keep them from rushing, there's certain accents that drive it and keep it from pushing. So now I'd be going with Bowlby to Springfield Illinois, jamming at the Black and Tans. That's because it was primarily a, a black jazz club, with very few white people. And very few white people make it black-tan. Black and Tans. Right? So now I'm playing there- When I was with the Lowrocks, Crow who also fiberglassed cars and did all of that and racecars and stuff turned me on to Dave Brubeck and Take Five, you know? And at first we thought Take Five was a weird way of playing four-four. But Norm Ray, who uhhhh was with the El Dorados he taught us it was five-four. You know so- What was I saying just before?

N-You were playing at the Black and Tans

M- Ok so were at the Black and Tans, right? So now, I was always listening to Joe Morello playing on the, you know, Take Five and he was very articulate, you know? So I was trying to be very articulate. Keeping my feet and my hands so they were in time. And they're in time. And I'm playing that way- da-chang dang- And I'll never forget what this uhh black drummer comes up to me and he says bro, he says you got great chops, you're right on. You keep time and you ain't rushing. But we don't play like that. So what do you mean? He said the bass drum has got to be on the beat. So if you're playing anything there it's on the beat. But the ride has got to be just a little bit on top- ting-ting. So if you're going like this, you know, here. If I'm playing a beat like this, so this is the beat, and I'm pushing this- ting-ting-ting-

N- Ok

M- And then this I'm playing in back (plays out a beat). In back of the beat. Just slight- not dragging it, just slightly. That's what makes funk.

N- Ooooo ok.

M- See? Here.

N- Thats really complicated

M- Its complicated

N- Its very complicated

M- Yes! And it's those kinds of things that changed my life as a musician. That opened me up, that broadened me. The simple little things you learn at the Black and Tan man. You ain't gonna get it nowhere else

N- Yea

M- Not in college, no where. You're gonna get it there. Right? Not, I'm sorry I didn't go to college so I could have learned the other things

N- I think you're fine

M- Well Sly Stone says don't take no lessons cause they'll change you and ruin ya. Right? When I switched to guitar from a drummer so I could only bar-bar the guitar and just going from motion to sound in the barring of it he says you-you-you don't need to take more lessons. They- just just keep the original feels because those guys are gonna change you and they're gonna make you play like they play. You don't wanna do that, just play how you play. Right? Sly Stone. Ok, so then, uh, so then that changed my life. So Bowlby became this figure that stayed in my life, mentor. Ok let's go to Detroit now. We go back to Detroit were playing there. So now Bowlby is in the band at the Chessmate. Ok?

N- I got a quick question about the Black and Tans

M- Yes?

N- You said it was a predominately African-American Club

M- Yes

N- Were you well-received there?

M- Absolutely. Because I was only there for one reason, and that's to play and learn music. And to meet people and I always greet people like myself. I never saw, I don't have prejudice. So if you don't have prejudice, you don't get prejudice.

N- Gotcha.

M- Right? Do unto others. Right? Ummm sometimes people would wonder, you know what I mean. You know, Like not really. Then I started playing the Black and Tans umm errr here in Detroit the Frolic bar. Willis, he was the guy, every time I walk in Willis was the doorman. He says hello Mr. Booker. Yes, we have a seat for you over here. You know? And he'd guide me over here, you know what I mean? And he made sure I was taken care of. And I used to play there with Bill Jennings, who helped write Honky-tonk, who uhh played with Ray Charles. Who helped, was one of the teachers of West Montgomery. Who got Jimmy Smith to play the organ instead of the piano. That's Bill Jennings. And he played in Detroit for a long time. And with Lyman Woodard, another great musician that I played with at the Frolic Bar. So Bowlby now is with me at the Chessmate, ok? And were playing there. And Downbeat in about 60, 65 or 6 writes up on us. They have a rhythm and blues rhythm section with a, with jazz uhh soloists. They didn't know how to say fusion yet. A few months later Larry Coryell comes out and they termed fusion. You see, I was always, you know, going to that. At the same time, at the Chessmate many people were coming there. John Lee Hooker, who I would hear in the early airwaves. Jim and Jean, for forecast with Harvey Brooks who played the bass on Mr. Tamborine Man with Dylan. And he was in Electric Flag. Ummm Junior Wells. I became the house band there and also another group, there was two of us Hal Mckinney and us. Hal Mckinney is very well known and he had a far-out jazz group and we had the rhythm and blues jazz. You know, with the fusing. For a while sometimes I even used drums, conga drums, timbales, trumpet, trombone, sax, organ, and guitar. And bass. Sometimes I had a 8-9-10 piece band playing in some different places like, experimenting with rock, funk, blues, latin. And world music because in my early youth in 59 also I used to play with Mac Jose and the Tamburitza Orchestra Round the World Revue and he made me learn a song from every nation in the world. I had to learn the difference the Slovenian polka, the Polish polka, the Mexican polka, the Serbian polka which is a kolo. And the Russian. You know they all have circle dances I had to learn. And you know polkas, and I had to learn all of those things. And he gave me a world view. So meanwhile I'm getting this esoteric teaching, I'm getting the

world teaching, you know around I'm getting the jazz and the blues and then one day I'm sitting at home and I hear ding-a-ling-a-ling. Hello? This is uhh Hello. D-d-d-dis is Hooker is Booker there? I says Hooker? John hooker. Maury said to call you said we should play the blues together. I says Sir I'm honored to play the blues with you. You're my hero! This is the guy I was hearing on my little transistor radio man. This guy is calling me. Man I went right down to the- he says ok, tonight at the Chessmate. I go down there, cause I was there all the time. I set up early, right? I'm sitting there behind my drums and I see John Lee Hooker come through the door. The doors open you can see him actually getting out of the cab and- and coming in. Comes right up to there, sets his thing up over there, sets it all up. Plugs it in. And I come up to him and shake his hands. I go like this and he says now you playing with Hooker. Wherever I go, you go. Wow. If I turn the beats, you turn the beats. If I go there, you go there. You're playing with me. You go wherever I go. So sometimes in the beginning I was one of the first drummers he was playing with in bands, before Canned Heat. So he got used to playing with the hippy rock-and-roll grooves rhythm and blues jazz band before Canned Heat. Thats where he got used to doing all of that. And with his son playing bass and organ,

(video Muruga plays) Hi there ladies and gentlemen. When we talk about blues we talk about all the different kinds of blues. But theres one kind of blues you cant call anything except

M- Thats me! Right after Woodstock.

N- Ooo

Video-named John Lee Hooker

M- 1970, Just a few months – hello Jeff. Whats your first name again?

N- Nick

M- Nick. O! Ok. Nicholas. Yes, ok. So this is Jeff.

N- Hi it's nice to meet you.

M- He just had his eye operation so he's not giving you the evil eye.

J- And on my foot

M- and foot, too.

N- Let me move my coat if you wanna sit.

M- So now you sorta get this atmosphere that I'm in the Chessmate and all of these musics are going on. Blues Magoos comes in looking for a job and they're fired because they were playing weird music at a regular rock bar that they were booked into. But I knew that that was psychedelic rock. So I told the owner, you know, to hire them. So all these, Paul Butterfield, Siegel-Schwall Blues band, Chuck and Jonie Mitchell, Patrick Sky, Phil Ochs. All of these people, the great folk artists. Phil Ochs used to come to my house. He, uhh, we used to hang out, you know, and became the best of buddies. And he's informing me of how he's just a umm music journalist. And at that time I was not liking Dylan but my hippy girlfriends got pissed off at me so they got me real stoned on some good reefer and then they said now listen to this. You know, they played Dylan, his protest stuff.

N- Ooo ok

M-I'm listening, and the guy's really saying some deep stuff. Cause all I was hearing was (Dylan impersonation). You know, like, he's a little nasal. I started listening then I really saw hes a true folk artist, you know? They got me into that. So I'm seeing the journalist aspect in the music. That profoundly changed me. Knowing musicians that were – This is Nicholas and that's Doug

N- Hi nice to meet you.

D- Toledo?

N- Yea

D- Which high school?

N- Perrysburg

D- I went to Perrysburg

N- Really?

M- Here, here, lets put this here and you can sit there. That's good, I think, right? You can sit here and thatll give them another chair. Jeff is my dear friend and engineer. And Doug plays bass in my band. I have two bass players. So now-

N- There we go

M- So I went through this whole thing from 64 into the Chessmate and all that was illuminating stuff that woke me up. You see, consciously, out-of-the-body, all of that kinda stuff with the music. And then seeing that the music was an amalgamation of many things. And because I was with Mac Jose 'Round the World Revue I saw that I really liked all kinds of world music, I wasn't stuck on one music. So Jim and Jean come in, I ended up then being brought to New York with them and Harvey Brooks who I said played on Mr. Tambourine

man. And he was with Al Cooper and different people. They bought me to New York and I recorded Verve Forecast the album Changes which is all Phil Ochs songs. And that's on Verve Forecast and it became this sorta like semi-hit playing in all of the colleges. And then we did a second album called People World. And that's when we started doing our own songs, and they let me even co-produce a little bit. But meanwhile while were in the studio, I'm in the studio with, being produced by Jerry Schoenbaum, who produced Chick Corea but a whole lot of other stuff, aside from that. And also one of the producers of Beatles, I forgot his name. I'll get it, but he was one of the Beatles producers also. And they're producing us. And so I'm seeing all of these techniques. Umm ok, we'll record this song a little faster, or make it slightly sharp. We'll overdub, make it slightly sharp. So now we got this phase. You know, and you're seeing things like that going. So I'm learning all of the recording stuff, and I'm going back and forth now to New York. So now I come back from New York and at the time, well it was high school, and then those record hops used to go to the Hungry Eye and the Cup of Socrates and you see all of the Beatnik musicians from New York and that, talking and telling stories. Poetry and Jazz and all of this, it's the atmosphere going on. You see, in Detroit, at the same time, Motown is coming out and that was the Soul and Rhythm and Blues, you see. And Brenda Lee was, was going on and that was all happening. In 65 I ended up playing with Brenda Lee and The Casuals. On, on the road with her, I was whispering the sweet nothings. They got me to play a little heavier back beat. We were playing the Peppermint Lounge, all of that kinda stuff. And big fair dates. But I couldn't stay with Brenda Lee because they were only paying me 150 a week and I wanted to help support my mom. So I came back and this guy allowed me to run a place called The Village cause I used to play in the village called the Village of Love. The song came from there, from 59 to 63 or 4, 5 it was going. That's where all the Motown acts, all of the Motown acts were all going there and getting their ideas. Mckinley Jackson, who is from Motown musician, and Tony Newton who played sax at the time actually did a gig where my Bass player didn't show up and we said why don't you play bass. He was so good playing bass for the first time I says don't quit. He kept on being a bass player and ended up being the bass player for Smokey Robins, for Michael Jackson, writing Snake Oil for Tony Williams. Its cause I told him, the guy forgot his, didn't show up to the gig so I said play bass instead of horn.

N- Wow

M- right?

N- Got his start with you

M- Yea

N- Thats great

M- And that's right then, there. I met him at the Village. So all of this atmosphere, all of this new music coming out. And it was no longer one music, it was these influences coming from everywhere and in there's Ravi Shankar with his sitar and all of these different things and it was a really, really great time. I start playing the Easttown, doing solos opposite Teddy Nugent and um

N- I'm gonna stop you there, you're friends are here and I don't wanna

M- No, no

N- You sure

M- They know I'm doing this

N- O, ok. I was going say I can come back another day

M- No, no, we're here

N- Ok, fantastic

M- Ok, you don't mind them being here

N- No, not at all.

M- They don't mind you. I used to be jamming with Teddy Nugent all the time. We'd be jamming with each other.

T- (Muruga plays a video) I was jamming with Steve Booker last night. And Booker, you know where Booker's at on the drums, he's just dangerous, dangerous and just incredible.

M- Right? So all of that's going on, all of this music. World, Heavy Metal, that New Age way of doing it. It's not anymore with a big company and its having your own little facility just like this. To do your music and to live it. See the rockstar, has the money to do it. But, you have to have this in order to- the rockstar has a lot of money to finance himself so you have to have something like this where you can record and even if you record a piece of crap you can try that crap, and perfect it. You see, you need to be able to make a lot of mistakes. If you spend a 100 dollars an hour for twelve hours and you make some mistakes, you're really trying to make the best of your mistakes because you can't afford another 1200 dollars to go in again. And if you can, then you're polishing yourself up and you've got the budget of a star. Right? So the only way to bypass that is instead of investing the money in all of that, buy your own house to create your own studio. Which is what I did. So then I was going back and forth, and by going to New York I saw the hippie thing cause I was seeing the Philmore East, I was playing there with Jim and Jean, opposite Timothy Leary. Ok

N-O wow.

M- We were on all of that stuff. I says man I gotta hip the bros in Detroit, were all Honkies over here, compared to that stuff. We gotta do something. So, you know, I ended up playing at places like the Easttown, and I saw that it was the same kinda thing. I was making 350 bucks for a twenty minute drum solo. Playing opposite Nugent and opposite Jack Bruce. Opposite Van Morrison and G. Garden and Van Winkle and things like that. So, I got a chance

to do a lot of jamming and even while in New York. Then 60-uhh so here I get a chance to play with John Lee Hooker, then I get a chance to play with Junior Wells, then I get a chance to sit in with Single Swall and Paul Butterfield. And I got a chance to sit in with Buffy St. Marie. I put the Indian thing behind her folk. It was beautiful. She recommended me to Herb Gart. And Herb Gart wanted to get me originally for Hendrix but then everybody left Herb Gart cause he was sorta losing it. And I, umm, when he called trying to get me to go Maury from the Manager of the Chessmate said he's not allowed to leave town. So the guy didn't call me to go with Hendrix. I lost that. Boy did I get teed off.

N- I can imagine.

M- Get mad. But we transcend. So, I later jammed with Hendrix at the Scene. He got my number, and I procrastinated, and by the time I wrote him a letter to tell him my feeling, I want to get together with him. Cause we jammed at the Scene.

N- Where's the Scene?

M- In New York. And umm when we jammed, I saw that he would, he saw me playing at the Scene, with Buddy Miles and Jim McCarty was in the band then too and all of that. Actually I knew Jim was recording To the Center of the Brain upstairs around the corner at some studio. Hendrix saw me jamming one night with Buddy Miles' band. There were two drummers, Mitchy Mitchell and me. With Larry Coryell. And Hendrix liked my playing, he says can I come back tomorrow and I'll jam with you. I don't have my left-handed ax. So I said yea and he came back. And umm he goes to playing and closes his eyes. He brought a bass, not a guitar. Said I want to play bass with you. So he brought the bass. And closes his eyes, and I close my eyes, cause I was already into meditation. And I left my body and I don't recall anything of the song until the song was ending and I found my arm. And I woke up out of that. So that was a real deep experience. But what ended the Chessmate thing is, I was playing at the Chessmate in 67 and I meet this here real far out lady, which is Betty Wagner-Shields. And she's a photographer. Shed taken my photos at the Chessmate. And she's an artist. She's shows, I start hanging with her and I never saw an artist have a studio. I never saw someone really be together with their art and really utilizing, sell it and work with it, you know. And so, She sorta got me into that, and I sorta turned her onto weed. And then she turned me on to

acid. Right, so, I used to being the Detroit Wheels and different people over to the house and we'd jam for days. Here she had this really nice pad in Franklin, and the river went by, the, uhh there was a mill with the- an apple cider mill there. We'd be there for days, sometimes on acid for a week. And I would just stay there then I'd go to the Frolic Bar you know, and just jam and come back. We were trying to find ourselves, you know. It's not like we were just partying. We heard Timothy Leary say tune in and drop out. And we took it serious. We tuned in and dropped out. That was the beginning of the drop-out, right?

N- I meant to ask, did you meet Timothy Leary?

M- Yea, I played for his last book signing.

N- Cool

M- And he jammed with us.

N- What was that like? Just, you know-

M- Umm he's a very conscious person, right? At first he didn't know how to take me. I had pink and green hair, leopard skin pants playing with the funk. But you know, bro, I did tune in and I did drop out. So we got to be good friends. I was hanging with that whole crew of people there, there was a whole bunch of people I didn't know them all like the best of friends. But they were all friends. From the guy that did Scissorhands, you know the movie, you know Scissorhands, that guy was hanging there. Dan Mapes, of- who invented- play something and it'll write it out on music. He invented the program that does that. My other friend worked on the programming for Pro Tools, they're all working for Apple and for Digitech. I'm hanging with all of those kinda people. So Timothy Leary was in that bunch. And I was there with the guys from AIM, playing the drums and protesting with the Indian guy out of jail. You know, that kinda stuff. And hearing Timothy Leary and the other guy that got busted from the CIA for breaking in, what was his name? Jeff? What's the other guy with Timothy Leary? The CIA guy

J- Are you talking about- o! G. Gordon Liddy.

M- Yea I think it was G. Gordon Liddy. And they're telling you how the government said ok we're gonna use our people for guinea pigs and put drugs in the subways. Sort of by the Village in Harlem.

N- Do you need a second?

M- We'll try it out on the hippies and the blacks. How bout that? Acid in the subway. You know, uhh weed bombs or whatever it is. Just to see what happens, if they used it on someone else. SO they picked certain areas and they did it. They used us as guinea pigs. They used my bass player as a guinea pig. Gave him acid, he didn't know what the heck was going on, you know? So, it made me go into, to see a psychiatrist.

N- Understandably

M- yea, yea

N- I would too.

M- yea, made him go see a psychiatrist. Our government did that. I think we have the best government in the world, but I think that- just like the Church is a great Church, but its run by humans, and so some humans are only going by the law of Moses, rather than the Grace of Christ. Meaning that until you get to grace, of the spirit and see love in everything, you gotta go by the law. And if alls you know is the law you're gonna run it by the law. You're run the government by the law, until people don't kill, don't rob, don't steal, don't fight, don't loot, don't have all of these things you need a law. Until they have the grace to not want to do those things. So, you see, the government is run by people who are running by the law and

they- some of them get grace. Some of our presidents had grace, Lincoln and, you know, Washington, they had, I feel they had grace. Not just the law, they had grace. Some of those early guys had grace. Ben Franklin, grace.

N- Speak a little bit more about that, what does grace mean, in this context.

M- Grace, there, there's matter that is created, and energy that is uncreated. And so grace is the uncreated energy that when I see that living life force energy in me is the same energy that's in you. And I see our equality. And because I see our equality, I love you as myself. And grace is that by chance, I got that insight, I got that insight. Other people don't have that insight. So they put vests with bombs and blow themselves up. That's not grace. That's trying to live by some law. The law that has no grace. Therefore I kill myself to kill you. That's not grace, that's darkness. That's umm ignorance. That's unknowledge. Do I blame them? No, they're raised in a surrounding that's like that. It's been going on for thousands of years, SO they're raised in that. And until they get to grace, until they get the opportunity to meditate and go within and see the inner light. The inner light of your spirit is grace. The inner, uncreated light of humanity, I feel that all, everything- Nikola Tesla was a Serbian whose father was an Orthodox priest So he knew about the grace of the uncreated energies of God. He saw that everything is light, cause he's Orthodox. Right? Not just Nikola Tesla, cause he's Orthodox. And he saw that Zoroaster was the same thing. He saw that the Buddha was the same thing. The Hindus were the same thing. They're going all after the uncreated energies of god. So our bureaucracy has made so much law that we don't have room for grace cause we just live this way. If I have grace, I'm not gonna want to harm you. I'm gonna love you as myself. And love everything as myself. Cause I see that we're a part of the whole thing. So grace is the uncreated spiritual energies of the father-source. See, if intelligence was not involved in what was before the Big Bang, it wouldn't have evolved out of the Bang with the energy that came out. If your awareness wasn't involved in what was before the bang, it wouldn't have evolved out of it. So God is involved energies. Involved, uncreated energies. Its involution, and then going in, and then evolution is the creation going out. SO you have to get involved in order to see what's evolving. You don't evolve until you go involved. So the people who are just running after being evolved people having wars are not evolved people. They're only involved with war, so they're not evolved. When you get involved with your true nature, you won't want war. So my motto is world peace through inner peace.

N- That's simple

M- Right? World Peace through inner peace. Until I'm peaceful inside I can't be peaceful with you. And until I see that the- are you breathing this? Can you breathe it? He's breathing it, he's breathing it. The African is breathing it. The Jewish guy, the Palestinian guy is breathing it. Hey! Guess what! Sorry to tell ya, the dog's breathing it. Huh? The fish is breathing it. Just in the water. The water for the fish is the blood carrying blood oxygen outside the body. The blood for us is being like a fish, having water inside the body. So the water inside the body blood carries the oxygen to us. And the water outside the body for the fish, cause it doesn't have all the organs, the gills, so stop and think now. You are not you with this you breathe. And the fish, so therefore all of this is your body. It's what keeps you alive. It's part of you. And for the fish, the whole lake or the whole ocean is the body. The fish is not just a fish. The fish is a speck with a big ocean. In other words, the fish is the ocean becoming evolved. And you are the air becoming evolved. Into this which can perceive its own self. Cause the air is the power. When my dad died, the body couldn't move no more, it rotted, and the air- spirit breath. (Serbian) Holy spirit breath. We say Serbian, spirit means (Serbian). Cause the breath is holy. Its the lifeforce. And that lifeforce is light. And you're light. And everything is light. That's why Nikola Tesla says everything is light. He knew everything was light, and he knew out of nothing, that nothing was nothing. Say God made us out of nothing, out of the something you couldn't see is the nothing.

N- Just don't have a better word for it

M- Faith means to know what you see is made out of what you don't see. I see you. In my, I'm seeing more than that. I'm seeing molecular structure, atomic structure, light. I'm seeing mental frequencies, feeling frequencies. I'm seeing awareness, I'm seeing awareness, im seeing beingness. I'm seeing that intelligence looking at my intelligence. I'm not just seeing this.

N- Yea

M- Yea, right? So when we play music, were not just playing music with this, this is God. So I'm changing the crap, ok? Number one, all stars think that they are big chiefs, and they wanna make more than everybody. And in some cases I understand, they spend 20-30 years, I

even got the right to say that. I spend my whole life to get this, to get that, but guess what? We're just all energy. We're just all equal. And if I want to see you play great, I have to treat you great. Somehow, in my capacity to be equal. So when we record here, we ain't made much. But everybody here knows that they're equal. He helps me engineer, guess what? If the band makes it, he's gonna make as much as everybody in the band. As an equal. Now if he does one extra job, or I do one extra job, that's treated as another person. Example- I own the studio. So I give the studio for free for us to record. So were not 1200 dollars a day. But I'm paying 200 dollars a month for electricity. So I need to stay alive, so well treat the studio as a person. So if five people record here, as musicians, and there's one extra engineer, and if I'm engineering too, he and I are getting paid as engineers.

N- Makes sense

M- The studios gonna get paid as another person. So I'm gonna get paid as one person as a musician, as an engineer, and a producer another person. And the studio will get paid. But I'm not making something over you where I say I'm worth more than you. I'm only, I'm only getting those three things cause those are three jobs I put into it, but I'm not worth more than you. We are equal here. So even though it's hard for us at times, and it is, you see. But we can really work on our projects here and know that were equal in putting something into it and were all gonna, if it wins, we are all gonna get paid equal.

N- That's really nice

M- That's what I wanted

N- It's a different model

M- I created a different paradigm. Cause the old paradigm is crew you. Yea, and everybody, the government and the people and the companies. Who's fighting, I didn't say nothing, I love my country. But how many big companies went and took the money and partied and did this

and did that and did nothing the people ended up not getting nothing back. You saw what we went through with our country.

N- Yes, I lived through that

M- So I don't have to, I'm not someone who's saying I think your crap cause there's nothing, Im looking at what is. And the same thing right now, you know you cant have a guy who's running for president who says we gotta kick all Muslims out. That's what hes sorta saying

N- Yea, pretty much

M- You should see his latest one. At least you'll have to get a card. I understand then, this is a five hundred year war, why? Because the Islamic Turks invaded our country, Serbia five hundred years ago. They took over for five hundred years my relative (Serbian) kicked them out. A hundred and fifty years ago.

J- It's about time we head out, don't wanna get in traffic

M- Ok, so is there another time you could also come

N- Yea I can probably come back next week on Wednesday

M- thats perfect