

Oral Memoirs
of
Jesse Cutler (Part One)

An Interview Conducted by

Geoffrey Cravero

February 8, 2024

Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories
(RICHS)

University of Central Florida RICHS

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Interview Histories

Interviewers: Geoffrey Cravero

Transcriber: Geoffrey Cravero

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the RICHES Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

Project Detail

RICHES is an umbrella program housing interdisciplinary public history projects that bring together different departments at UCF with profit and non-profit sectors of the community.

Central Florida has often been associated with large-scale, commercial tourism and housing development. While those aspects of Central Florida are important to the economic growth of the region, much of its history has remained unnoticed and under researched. The Public History program at UCF links many projects under one initiative to promote the collection and preservation of Central Florida history. By facilitating research that records and presents the stories of communities, businesses, and institutions in Central Florida, RICHES seeks to provide the region with a deeper sense of its heritage. At the same time, the initiative connects the UCF students and faculty with the community and creates a foundation on which Central Floridians can build a better sense of their history.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Jesse Cutler is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on February 8, 2024.

Abstract

An oral history interview of Jesse Cutler, a musician, composer, actor, producer, and entrepreneur. The interview was conducted by Geoffrey Cravero at Trevor Colbourn Hall at the University of Central Florida, in Orlando, Florida, on February 8th, 2024. Some of the topics covered include growing up and attending schools in New York, becoming involved in the Broadway musical *Godspell*, finding a manager, starting a career in the music industry and signing with his first record label, enjoying his success, purchasing a penthouse and a dog, taking his first trip to Beverly Hills, California, meeting Stevie Wonder and starting a romantic

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relationship with Jolie Jones, moving to Beverly Hills with Jolie Jones and meeting her sisters, starting a romantic relationship with Deana Martin, meeting Tupac Shakur, encountering interesting women and his advice to young people, performing at the Whisky a Go Go and having a dangerous encounter with Pamela Courson, reflecting on missed opportunities, signing with United Artists Records, his love for R&B music, astrology and numerology, and meeting Michael Jackson and Marvin Gaye.

Jesse Cutler

Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Geoffrey Cravero
February 8, 2024
Orlando, Florida

0:00:00

Growing up and attending schools in New York

Cravero Okay [*smacks lips*]. This is Geoffrey Cravero. And with me is, uh, Mr. Jesse Cutler¹. We are conducting an interview in Trevor Colbourn Hall at the University of Central Florida in Orlando on Thursday, February 8th, 2024.

Mr. Cutler, thank you so much for speaking with us today. Would you please begin by stating your name and telling us a little bit about where you're from and what life was like for you growing up?

Cutler Well, my name is Jesse Cutler. Uh, I was born in Brooklyn, New York, ah, a long time ago. 1951. And, as a child, I, uh, had an older sister. And, uh, grew up. Had a little puppy. I went to a Catholic school, uh, fifth – when I was five and six, until my dad built a house on Long Island. Malverne, Long Island. And, uh, I went to Valley Stream North High School². And then I attended, uh, uh, the Highland School Preparatory³ in Jamaica Estates, which was predominantly Jewish. And being, Italian, well, it kind of went together. We – we all had a good time. I – there was only three Italian boys. We were branded “mafia children” because who could afford \$10,000 a year to go to high school?

But it was good move thanks to my – my father, uh, who wanted me to get a really good education. There were only a hundred kids in the whole school out of three grades. 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. One hundred kids. That's very small. So some of my classes, I would have only maybe five or six kids in a class. Sometimes it was two. My French class. But, uh, that's my early – early childhood.

And after I graduated from high school, uh, I was lucky to get a, uh – a scholarship to Stanford University. And, uh, one day, I was up in the Catskills and my dad was walking with me. I had a band playing, uh, for kids during – when the parents – they were staying at the Kutsher's Country Club⁴, which had

¹ Born Louis-Milo Gibaldi (August 28, 1951 –).

² Valley Stream North High School is located at 750 Herman Avenue, Franklin Square, New York 11010.

³ Highland School Preparatory is located at 162-10 Highland Avenue, Jamaica, New York 11432

⁴ Kutsher's Country Club was located at 163 Kutsher Road, Monticello, New York 12701.

something to do with Ashton Kutcher⁵. I think it might be his grandfather. Uh, we would play for the kids when the – when the parents were dining. And we would – we would entertain them. Uh, so my dad comes up to visit, and as we're walking down, I – I go, "Dad. Do you realize I got a – I got a scholarship to uh, an Ivy League school? It's like Harvard. I go, "It's a scholarship. You don't have to pay anything." He goes, "Well, you know I'd really like you to stay in New York. You know? California's far. It's 3,000 miles away." He goes, "I'll tell you what. If you stick around New York, go to any college in New York. I'll buy you any car you want." Well, you don't say that to a 17-year-old kid just getting ready to graduate high school. I go, "Any car? Uh, a British racing green Jaguar convertible with wire wheels and a wooden steering wheel?" "Yeah. Sure."

0:03:17

Becoming involved in the Broadway musical *Godspell*

So, my father, in a way, changed my life. Because, had I gone the other way to California to go to Stanford, I would have ended up in law school. And I would have been an entertainment lawyer. That's what I wanted to be. But since I stuck around New York, my good friend Rick Shutter – drummer who was in my early band at 13, 14 years old called the Young Executives, calls me up and said, "Somebody's coming over the house. He wrote a play. Bring your guitar over." I go, "I'm not interested. I'm going to end up going to NYU Law School⁶." "Uh, just bring your guitar over."

So, I go over there. I walk in. There's a guy named Stephen⁷ sitting in a chair and getting ready to – I didn't know who he was. He's getting ready to go over to the piano. Ricky's piano. And all of a sudden, he plays 15 songs. "Now that's pretty good." I go, "What do you call that?" He goes, "*Godspell*." I go, "You mean like gospel?" "No. *Godspell*." I go, "That's pretty good. But that's guitar music. That's not piano music." So, I – I have instant recall. I was blessed with that. So, I could play back some of what he played. He goes, "Man, I want you in the show."

I told my dad about it. And he goes, "Those shows close in two weeks." *Godspell* not only got a Grammy for the original cast album, became a motion picture for Columbia Pictures⁸, but it ran not for two weeks. It ran for 12 years on Broadway. And I did close to 800 shows. That's 800 – that's eight shows a week every week for I – close to a year and a half. About 18 months.

So, I was fortunate in a way to be part of that original cast. I'm the lead guitarist and singer on "On the Willows", which is all over the world. But that's really not where I was – originally wanted to go. And so, my life shifter from becoming an

⁵ Christopher Ashton Kutcher (February 7, 1978 –).

⁶ New York University School of Law is located at 40 Washington Square South, New York, New York 10012.

⁷ Stephen Lawrence Schwartz (March 6, 1948 –).

⁸ Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. is an American film production and distribution company that is a member of the Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group.

entertainment lawyer to becoming an entertainer. And, uh, that's the beginning of that story.

So, yeah. That's a big jump from 5 years old with my little beagle, walking down the block to Catholic school. Then, walking out of the, uh, Cherry Lane Theatre⁹ in Greenwich Village. And then, uh, the bigger theater uptown, uh, in *Godspell*. I mean that's night and day.

0:05:49

Finding a manager, starting a career in the music industry and signing with his first record label

Uh, so after that, uh, I walked around town looking for a manager. Somebody – the president of MGM¹⁰, he was the head of the publishing company, said to me, “Listen. You – you already played guitar on the original cast album. You already played on the Columbia Pictures soundtrack. There's nothing more for you here. You need a manager.” So, I went around town [*knocks table*]. I'll never forget walking around town with my guitar. My Martin guitar. Knocking on doors until I finally connected with somebody. And they brought me to Fabergé¹¹, who launched their new record label called Brut Records¹². And I was the first artist. Michael Franks¹³ was the second, and a – a – a comedian¹⁴ – what's his name [*taps table*]? Um, famous comedian, who I toured with. I opened the show with him. I'm trying to remember. When you get old, your memory starts to go a little bit. Uh, but I'll get back to that one.

And, uh, I recorded three singles for Brut Records. And they were good. And the people backing me was Aretha Franklin's¹⁵ band with, uh, Bernard Purdie¹⁶ w – he was known as “Pretty” Purdie, Cornell Dupree¹⁷, uh, uh, Chuck Rainey¹⁸ on bass. This is Aretha Franklin's band on all her hit records. On a lot of other hits, too. And the reality is, the best compliment I ever got as a musician is when “Pretty” Purdie, the drummer, said to me, “You know, for a white boy, you got perfect time.” And I take that compliment knowing who that is on “Rock Steady” and all those big s – oh, the Cadillac. And all those Aretha songs. That he gave me that compliment that I had perfect time. I mean that – even – that was 50

⁹ Cherry Lane Theatre is located at 38 Commerce Street, New York, New York 10014.

¹⁰ Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is an American media company based in Beverly Hills, California.

¹¹ The House of Faberge was a jewelry firm founded in 1842 by Gustav Faberge in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

¹² Faberge Cosmetics Company launched Brut Records in 1971 as an offshoot of Brut Productions, its film production company named after their line of men's toiletries and fragrances. The label closed in 1974.

¹³ Michael Franks (September 18, 1944 –).

¹⁴ Robert Klein (February 8, 1942 –).

¹⁵ Aretha Louise Franklin (March 25, 1942 – August 16, 2018).

¹⁶ Bernard Lee Purdie (June 11, 1939 –).

¹⁷ Cornell Luther Dupree (December 19, 1942 – May 8, 2011.)

¹⁸ Charles Walter Rainey III (June 17, 1940).

years ago, and I still remember it like it was yesterday. Let's see. But who was that guy? Mike – Michael Franks. I'm trying to think of the comedian's name.

0:08:02 Enjoying his success, purchasing a penthouse and a dog

Anyway, I have 101 stories I could tell of what happened after Fabergé during the three masters. Uh, I – they gave me money when I signed the contract. And all of a sudden, I got myself my own penthouse on East 51st Street. 300 East 51st Street. And my best friend, Mark, and I hung out at the beach. He got married, uh, he had from[sic] Long Island. From Long Beach. And, uh, all of a sudden, I'm in Manhattan. I had money in the bank. And I go to any restaurant I want to go. Take anybody out.

Uh, I bought a dog. And, uh, I bought a Siberian Husky. And the day my dad came to visit, we're inside the – the dog store. And, uh, the woman goes, "Well, this is a – a championship – from a championship bloodline. The sire and dam for this dog are champions. So, you can breed this dog. So, I'm looking at this gorgeous dog – puppy with blue eyes and eyeliner. I love Siberian Huskies. Do you know that Siberian Huskies are the only dogs that have a certain enzyme in their mouth that they don't have bad breath? I'm sure most people don't know that. So, if you're an Eskimo in an igloo with 12 huskies, if they had – didn't have that you would die of asphyxiation for sure. So, they're the only dogs.

Uh, so, on the way home, I'm walking the dog and my father goes, "How much you pay for that dog?" "\$600." "\$600?" I guess that was a lot back then in 1973. I go, "Look. It's my money. It's my apartment. It's my dog." Because when I had my first little dog, I only had him for about a month. I came home one day from St. Brigid's Catholic School¹⁹ in uh, uh – in – in – and, uh, what was it? Ridgewood, Brooklyn. I came home. I go, "Where's Tiny?" And my – my mother goes, "I gave him to Uncle John. But he's got 20 acres that he could run around all over." I go, "You gave my dog away? I don't like you very much. That's it. Our relationship –" I was six years old. Like that's it. So, when I bought the dog myself years later, and I'm walking home – oh, my father kept saying, "\$600. Wait 'til I tell your mother." "Go tell her what you want. It's my money, my place, my dog. And I'm going to keep that –" I kept that dog for 15 years. And I loved that dog. He was – his name was Zeus. And when I walked through Central Park, New York, uh, on the weekends, different girls would come over. I used to look at him. I go, "I don't know. Is it you or me? It's probably you. They all want to pet you." Like he goes, "Well, maybe it's you, too. Ha, ha ha." Anyway, uh, so life in New York was great.

0:11:12 Taking his first trip to Beverly Hills, California, meeting Stevie Wonder and starting a romantic relationship with Jolie Jones

¹⁹ St. Brigid St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Academy is located at 438 Grove Street, Brooklyn, New York 11237.

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And so, I took my first trip with my friend, Mark, to Beverly Hills, and that was a lot of fun. Back in '73. And, uh, I went and got a—I ride horses when I can. And I—I had a custom pair of riding boots made. They were \$800. I didn't care. Unfortunately, on the way back, Mark and I were, uh, in a 747, up the spiral staircase. And up there, there used to be a bar and a piano. And who's up there? Stevie Wonder.²⁰ We walk in there and I introduce myself. We're hanging out with Stevie Wonder. And I go, "Oh, my God. I forgot my boots." And my friend, Mark, says, "Ah. You got plenty of money. Get another pair." "No. Those were custom made boots, man."

Two weeks later, I get a phone call. "Hi. Is this Jesse Cutler?" I go, "Yeah." "Oh. This is Jolie²¹. I have your boots." "You have my boots? Where are you?" "I'm on 63rd and — and — and 3rd Avenue. 61st and 3rd Avenue in Penthouse B." "Penthouse B? I'll be right over." So, I could call Fabergé up and get a limousine driver, Danny, to pick me up. I go over there. I go upstairs. The door opens up and this girl is holding my boots. Like this. Gorgeous mulatto chick. And, uh, she doesn't really tell me who she is. And I go, "Listen. I have a limo downstairs. Let me take you to lunch."

So, where do I take her? I took her to Joe Namath's²² place, Bachelors III,²³ because he was on the contract of Fabergé, and I wanted to show off a little bit. Because when I walked in, he went, "Hey, Jesse. How you doing?" 'Cause I met him up in the offices of Fabergé, and, uh, I thought she'd be impressed. But I still didn't know who she was. I realized that was no big deal until she goes, "Can we go to Bloomingdale's²⁴ after we have lunch?" I go, "Sure." We go to Bloomingdale's. And a Black cash register—the cash lady—the cashier in—in Bloomingdale's in the lingerie department sees her and says, "Oh, my God. It's you. I just saw you on the cover of *Jet*²⁵ and *Ebony*²⁶ magazine. And I'm wondering, *Who is this chick?* I don't—I—I—I still don't know who she is. I go, "Let's go to my place. I have a—I have my own penthouse." "Really?" I go.

So, we get to my place. And, uh, she stayed with me. And a couple day later, I get a phone call. Like this. "Hi. Is, uh, Jolie there?" I go, "Who's this?" He goes, "This is Q." I go, "Who? Q-tip?" And he laughed. I go—it—because those were landlines then, so it's scratchy. I go, "It's, uh, very scratchy. Where are you?" He goes, "Oh, I'm in Japan." I go, "What are you doing in Japan?" I don't know who it is. "Oh, I'm on tour." And all of a sudden, if you saw my face, I went like this

²⁰ Stevland Hardaway Morris (May 13, 1950 –).

²¹ Jolie Jones Levine (October 4, 1953 –).

²² Joseph William Namath (May 31, 1943 –).

²³ Bachelors III was located at 798 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10065.

²⁴ Bloomingdale's Inc. is an American luxury department store chain founded in 1861.

²⁵ *Jet* is an American weekly magazine focusing on news, culture, and entertainment related to the African American community.

²⁶ *Ebony* is a monthly magazine that focuses on news, culture, and entertainment related to the African American community.

t—to Jolie. I went, “Are you Quincy Jones’s²⁷ daughter?” She goes, “Oh, daddy.” She takes the phone out of my hand. And, uh, I went into the bathroom. I went—my afro then. Picked it all out. I come out. Lit a cigarette. I’m like, “Oh, so you’re Quincy Jones’s daughter [laughs]. Sauve. You know?”

0:14:35 Moving to Beverly Hills with Jolie Jones and meeting her sisters

She ended up staying with me the whole summer. And she kept saying, “I’m gonna go back to L.A., and you should come. And you—you belong in Beverly Hills. You—not New York.” And that was a big deal, looking back in time. Had I stayed in New York, Fabergé with Brut Records would have pushed me all over the place, as far as my career. But I guess I was impressed. And I was seduced to go to Beverly Hills with Quincy Jones’s daughter. And to do—and to make sure I would—came out, she took my Siberian Husky with her as collateral. And there I was with Mark, Jolie Jones, and me and my dog, Zeus, in the cage in the limo, looking at me going, “What the fu—where are we going?” You know? She walked him on—she took him onto the plane.

And I stayed in New York for a couple more months. And, uh, the end of the summer, I packed up and I ended up being picked up at the airport in a white Bentley. Uh, and she was making cocktails in the back. And—and interestingly enough, she took me to a private club on the way from the airport before—before we got to the house. And as I walked up the stairs, who did I meet? I met the guy who was the star of the cowboy, uh—he was a—he was one of the TV stars. He looked at me and he goes, “You look like an interesting character. Let me buy you a drink.” And I’m trying to remember his name. But, uh, I go, “My mother’s in love with you. I—every time you’re on TV.” He goes, “That’s my man.” Like he said, “For real?” I go, “Yeah. You and a couple other guys.”

But anyway. Uh, so we finish there, and we end up back in the limo. Back—back in the Bentley. And we go up—all the way up to Benedict Canyon.²⁸ And we go down. And all of a sudden, we get to these gates. And the gates open up. Go into the driveway. Like a few acres. A beautiful house. We walked in there. And, um, next morning, I woke up and there were two little girls running around named Rashida²⁹ and Kidada Jones³⁰, who today, you may know, you know, uh, uh, Rashi—uh, Rashida starred in *The Office*³¹ [taps table]. And she’s in a lot of commercials now [taps table]. She’s a beautiful girl [taps table]. Her mother was Peggy Lipton.³² Which I never knew that Peggy Lipton from *The Mod Squad*³³

²⁷ Quincy Delight Jones Jr. (March 14, 1933 –).

²⁸ Benedict Canyon is an area in the Westside of Los Angeles, California.

²⁹ Rashida Leah Jones (February 25, 1976 –).

³⁰ Kidada Ann Jones (March 22, 1974 –).

³¹ *The Office* was an American comedy television series that aired on NBC from 2005 to 2013.

³² Margaret Ann Lipton (August 30, 1946 – May 11, 2019).

³³ *The Mod Squad* was an American crime drama television series that aired on ABC from 1968 to 1973.

was part of the Lipton family.³⁴ From the tea family. I d—I didn't know. I could figure out why that happened [*laughs*]. Quincy. It turns out, like in my life, when you get a little fame, it doesn't matter how much money you have. People—women are attracted to your talent because it's unique. And it's—and it's been addressed and promoted. And, uh, they have tons of millions of dollars. They don't care. You know?

0:17:47 Starting a romantic relationship with Deana Martin

So, I, uh, met Dean Mar—I was introduced to Dean Martin's daughter at a party for the guy that created Botox³⁵ from Switzerland. And, uh, my friend came over. He goes, "I'm going to change your life." And he walks this girl over. I don't know who she is. She goes, "This is Deana³⁶." "Hi." And, uh, later that night, I get a phone call. "Hi." "Oh, this is Deana Martin." I go, "Well, that's a great name. That sounds like Dean Martin³⁷." She goes, "Well, Dean Martin's my father." I almost dropped the phone. I go, "You the girl I met at the party on Sunset Boulevard?" She goes, "Yeah. Listen. I'd love to take you out to dinner with me. Uh, I'm having dinner with Michael Caine³⁸ and Steve, uh, uh—the comedian. Steve, uh.

Cravero Martin?

Cutler Steve Martin.³⁹

Cravero [*clears throat*].

Cutler I—I'd never thought of it. Deana Martin. Steve Martin. Could there be a relation? Or who knows? I doubt it. But, uh—and there I was. I had a ch—said, "Let me check my calendar." It's like 2 o'clock in the morning. I, uh—I went picked her up. Went up to Bel Aire. This restaurant [*knocks table*]. And there I am. Sitting next to Steve Martin and looking—and Deana. And looking at Michael Caine and his wife, Shakira⁴⁰, at the time. And, uh, like I'm back to normal. I felt back to normal.

But, you know? Dean Martin's daughter knew everybody. I mean is—you couldn't get bigger than Dean Martin. You know? Frank Sinatra⁴¹. Dean [*knocks*

³⁴ Lipton is a British brand of tea, soup, and dipping sauce.

³⁵ Botulinum toxin, commonly called Botox, is a highly potent neurotoxic protein that is used commercially for medical and cosmetic purposes.

³⁶ Deana Martin (August 19, 1948 –).

³⁷ Dean Martin (born Dino Paul Crocetti) (June 7, 1917 – December 25, 1995).

³⁸ Sir Michael Caine CBE (born Maurice Joseph Micklewhite) (March 14, 1933 –).

³⁹ Stephen Glenn Martin (August 14, 1945 –).

⁴⁰ Shakira, Lady Caine (February 23, 1947 –).

⁴¹ Francis Albery Sinatra (December 12, 1915 – May 14, 1998).

table] Martin. Sammy [knocks table] Davis⁴². Joey [knocks table] Bishop⁴³. The Rat Pack. I mean you couldn't get bigger than that. You could get as big, but not bigger. There isn't any bigger at the time. Anyway.

There was really, uh – Well, Michael Jackson⁴⁴ was starting to pop. Uh, I remember one day, since I'm telling stories, uh, when I signed with Fabergé, I had a – a new magazi – *Cashbox*⁴⁵ and *Record World*⁴⁶. And, uh, uh, these magazines were the – the top magazines in the music industry. And I remember opening up *Cashbox* and there's my picture on the top with Richard Barry, the vice-president and the owner's son, who is in charge of Brut Records – a picture of me and him. And right below me is a picture of Prince⁴⁷ signing his first, uh, contract with Warner Brothers. He was 18 and I was 21. And of all the people I met, and I met pretty much everybody – I was more R&B. I always learned to the R&B music. So, when I met Marvin Gaye⁴⁸ and Barry White⁴⁹, I was thrilled. And Berry Gordy⁵⁰. That was a big thrill. I never met Prince. I met Michael Jackson.

0:20:52 Meeting Tupac Shakur

And, um – oh, so years later, I'm sitting in Quincy Jones's living room, and I see a guy sitting in one of the chairs with a bandana on. He's bald with a bandana on his head. And I walk over. I go, "Shupat. Shupat Takur – what is it? Tupac Shakur⁵¹." I go, "It's you." He goes, "I think it's me." He goes, "Man." That is the greatest night. Tupac Shakur. He – he stood up. He was kind of short. He was about this big. And, uh, we did this kind of thing. And he – he was engaged to Kidada Jones. To Quincy's daughter. And, uh, that's how she popped up on the, uh – the news reels. Uh, she – uh, she wasn't really an actress like – like Rashida.

0:21:45 Encountering interesting women and his advice to young people

But, uh, Jolie Jones married the producer of Simply, uh, Red⁵² [hums song]. They were good. They were from Ireland I think. Simply Red. But she married him. I didn't marry her.

⁴² Samuel George Davis Jr. (December 8, 1925 – May 16, 1990).

⁴³ Joseph Abraham Gottlieb (February 3, 1918 – October 17, 2007).

⁴⁴ Michael Joseph Jackson (August 29, 1958 – June 25, 2009).

⁴⁵ *Cashbox* was an American weekly music industry trade magazine that published from 1942 to 1996. Ten years after its dissolution, it was revived as an online magazine called *Cashbox Magazine*.

⁴⁶ *Record World* was an American weekly music industry trade magazine that published from 1946 to 1982.

⁴⁷ Prince Rogers Nelson (June 7, 1958 – April 21, 2016).

⁴⁸ Marvin Pentz Gaye Jr. (April 2, 1939 – April 1, 1984).

⁴⁹ Barry Eugene Carter (September 12, 1944 – Jul 4, 2003).

⁵⁰ Berry Gordy III (November 28, 1929 –).

⁵¹ Tupac Amaru Shakur (June 16, 1971 – September 13, 1996).

⁵² Simply Red are a British soul band formed in Manchester in 1985.

So, uh, all these interesting women came around me. Very interesting. Susan Sears from Sears and Roebuck⁵³. She picked me up in her baby blue Bentley. A Rolls-Royce actually. They came around. I was young, you know? I didn't think about marriage until I was more thirtyish. And I—anybody who's watching this, I highly recommend that you do get a good education. And then, they—today's world, you should get your master's degree. And even go, if you can, to a PhD. That's a great accomplishment. Anybody would—anybody anywhere will give you respect. Um, and not to get married until—for women, like 28 plus. And men should be 30. 30 plus. Just saying, um, from experience, you'd be much happier and more grounded at that point.

0:23:02 Performing at the Whisky a Go Go and having a dangerous encounter with Pamela Courson

Um, so, I went on after that. And living in L.A. I say goodbye to Fabergé. I'm at—living in L.A. I'm—I'm doing concerts. I started out at the Whisky a Go Go⁵⁴. I opened for Blondie⁵⁵. Deborah Harry⁵⁶. And I was there three nights. And who comes backstage? Uh, my manager brings this redhead—very pretty—backstage. And, uh, she comes over. She goes, "I think you're great." I was up there for two hours, and I blew that audience away. I had a great band. And my band was great. Not only was my band great but stars out of the audience—Lou—Lou—the—the—the—the horn player for Chicago⁵⁷ came onstage. Played with us. Claudia Lennear⁵⁸, who sang with the Rolling Stones⁵⁹, came onstage. And place was rocking.

So, now I'm backstage, and this little redhead with blue eyes is looking at me, telling me, "I think you're fantastic." "Oh. Thanks. Uh, appreciate it." Anyway, we're backstage, and there's—they have like a bar back there. And everybody's doing things. All the groupies come in.

Well, anyway, I get home. It's about 3:30 in the morning. And I get a pho—another phone call. And, uh, it's, uh, "Hello." "Listen. This is me. I'm the girl that told you you were great. The redhead. Are you—you wanna come over my house?" I go, "Where are you?" "I'm in Hancock Park⁶⁰." That's in L.A. That's a nice area in L.A. "Okay. What's your address [*laughs*]?"

⁵³ Sears, Roebuck and Co. is an American chain of department stores founded in 1892.

⁵⁴ The Whisky a Go Go is located at 8901 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90069.

⁵⁵ Blondie is an American rock band formed in New York City in 1974.

⁵⁶ Deborah Ann Harry (born Angela Trimble) (July 1, 1945 –).

⁵⁷ Chicago is an American rock band formed in Chicago in 1967.

⁵⁸ Claudia Lennear (born Claudia Joy Offley) (1946 –).

⁵⁹ The Rolling Stones are an English rock band formed in London in 1962.

⁶⁰ Hancock Park is a neighborhood in the Wilshire area of Los Angeles, California.

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So, I went over there. And this is real. Um, Pamela Courson⁶¹ was her name. I didn't know who she was at the time. So, I knock on the door. She opens up. I'm all dressed 'cause I, you know – it was from the night I was there. I was wearing a real nice outfit. I think they had put makeup on me. Whatever. You know [*rubs hands together*]? And it was, uh – this was the first night we were at the Whisky a Go Go. And all I kept thinking about, going to her house, is *I can't wait to see the reviews in the – in Hollywood Reporter and Variety*. Like the reviews.

So, I'm sitting there on the couch next to her. And all of a sudden, I hear [*knocks*]. And she says, "Oh, no. It's Ronnie." It's 4 o'clock in the morning. The door come – both – the door comes open, and a guy walks in with a gun. And he's holding it. And he goes, "What you doing with my bitch?" And he hit me like this. And goes like this. Click. Uh, with a .38 caliber. So, I'm looking at bullets. Remember, all I kept thinking about is my reviews. I got to stay alive. And then, he put the gun down. I mean it was just a little something there. But he dragged her away. And the first thing I did was I – I figured out how to open the gun. Dumped all the bullets out in the cushion. I put the gun back. Well, you can't kill me now. I'm going to fight my way out. When you're from Brooklyn, you're a – you're tough. You're just tough.

Anyway, uh, uh, he – he comes out. He came in like a lion, and he left like a lamb, going like this. "Man. I'm sorry, man. I didn't mean to. I didn't mean to do nothing. I mean, I didn't know you with the Q." With the Q. I had to think about that. And then, he – "I'm just gonna take my little gun and go." And he left. The next thing you know, sh – this girl – I – I still don't know who she is. This girl's[sic] comes crawling in, and she says, "And if you weren't here – you saved my life. I'm[sic] should take you to – to, uh – to France and hold a press conference in Paris and tell the world you're going to be the biggest rock star." I'm looking at her. She goes, "I have millions of dollars." I go, "Well, that's good." I go, "Who are you [*laughs*]?" She's, "I'm Jim Morrison's⁶² widow. From the Doors⁶³."

Yeah. That was kind of freaky. That's[sic] really happened. And, uh, uh, since I was there and that happened, I said, "Listen. I have the pink caddy outside." I had this really cool Cadillac. White top. Pink Body. It was – it was a sedan DeVille. But it was like an older car. Uh, but in good shape. And I said, "Why don't you follow me with your car to my house?"

So, we get to my house in, uh, Laurel Canyon⁶⁴. I park. I said, "Park in the driveway." We get up. I knock on the door. And Angel, my drummer – Steven

⁶¹ Pamela Susan Courson (December 22, 1946 – April 25, 1974).

⁶² James Douglas Morrison (December 8, 1943 – July 3, 1971).

⁶³ The Doors were an American rock band formed in Los Angeles in 1965.

⁶⁴ Laurel Canyon is a mountainous neighborhood in the Hollywood Hills region of the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Angeles, California.

Angel opens the door. And I go, “Shh. Don’t say anything. Jim Morrison’s widow’s behind me. Don’t—but don’t say nothing [laughs].” “Yeah. Okay [laughs].” We go in. It’s 4:30 in the morning now. And now, uh, she stayed with me for a couple days [taps table]. And—but in my mind—oh.

0:28:31 Reflecting on missed opportunities

So, the next day, yeah, we went to the s—newsstand to get a copy of my, uh—my, uh, report from *Variety*. And I got a very good review. I was very thrilled about that. Um, with Jim Morrison’s wife—was pushing me to go to—to take me to Paris to hold a press conference. She said, “I could hold a press conference. Everybody will come. And I’ll say this is the next big star.” That could have happened. I could have married Dean Martin’s daughter. That could have happened. I could have stayed with Fabergé. That could have—that would have happened. So, a lot of lucky, good things happened to me. And a lot of things I turned down because I wanted to do it on my own.

And so, after, uh, uh, Quincy’s daughter and I split up, uh, I got my own apartment. I got my dog back. And I put a new band together. And I played all over town. Up and down the West Coast. And, um, I then, uh, actually returned to New York and, uh, stayed there for—for about six months. Went down to Florida to visit my parents. And every day, I would go along the boardwalk in Hollywood Beach and play the piano. So, I wrote a whole bunch of new songs.

And when I went back to L.A., I had my bag full of new songs. And on Valentine’s Day, which is coming up in 2024 now shortly, I had my briefcase, two pieces of luggage, and my two guitars. Pulling up to my friend, Stanley B. Herman, the actor’s, condominium. And a girl and two guys are walking along. And she says, “Do you need any help?” I go, “Yeah. Oh, that’d be really nice.” We end—we end up in the elevator with my two—all my bags and guitars. We get upstairs. And this girl named Randi Pitch, who, uh—who I should have married, we connected. We stayed together. We got our own apartment. We got our own place. And she was the luckiest person, for me, that I ever met. And I’m still in touch with her. And it’s 45 years later.

0:31:09 Signing with United Artists Records, his love for R&B music, astrology and numerology, and meeting Michael Jackson and Marvin Gaye

The reality is, I ended up getting signed to United Artists Records⁶⁵, being produced by Academy Award winner Joe Renzetti⁶⁶. And there I am in the studio with, uh, the best triple scale musicians and my dream—because I always

⁶⁵ United Artists Records was an American record label founded by Max E. Youngstein of United Artists in 1957 to issue movie soundtracks. The label expanded into other genres.

⁶⁶ Joe Renzetti (January 4, 1941 –).

loved R&B music. I love the Stylistics⁶⁷, the Delfonics⁶⁸, Jerry Butler⁶⁹, I—Marvin Gaye. Because with the R&B music, it had great beats. But it had sweeping strings and horns. And that's what I liked. I don't like gothic music. I don't like [*impersonates gothic music*]. See? That makes no sense to me. Some of the bands are great. And the guitar playing is great. But that screaming—my—my friend who owns the uh, uh, Studio Live USA⁷⁰—is a very good engineer. Genius, actually. When I call him, I go, "Who's there today?" He goes, "I have the angry people." I knew right away what he meant. Because I can hear in the background [*impersonates gothic music*]. I don't get it. You know?

And I've figured out this. You could tell a lot about a person by the kind of music that they select. That they want to take into their brain. You could tell a lot about a personality. Not—with that. I'm into astrology and I'm into numerology. If you know about all this, you can figure people out in two seconds by simply asking what—what is the number of the day you were born from 1 to 31. All those numbers mean something. Because in numerology, it's one to nine. No zeros. That's it. However, there's the next level.

And here's a cute—here's a cute story. So, I'm sitting in Quincy's house. And who's sitting next to me? Michael Jackson [*taps table*]. And Quincy, which is know as Q, is sitting right over there. And I go, "Michael, you bleaching?" And Quin—Quincy goes like this. Did I really ask Michael Jackson that? I go, "Q. I was born August 28th. Michael, tell Quincy when you were born." He was born August 29th. The day after me. But the difference is 28 is a ten. Two plus eight is ten. Take away the zeros. I'm one. I'm the hermit. The loner. Michael was 29. That's 11. That's the master number of the universe. But I was right next—I'm always next to the greatness. And I call it the "Cutler Edge". So, if you ev—ever want to check me out, go to thecutleredge.com. And you'll go to jessecutler.com.

Anyway, Michael was very humble and lowkey and fantastic. And, in my life, I was blessed to meet some of the greatest entertainment people ever. Gene Kelly⁷¹, uh, Bill Cosby⁷², Michael Jackson. Uh, when I met Marvin Gaye, I was like a girl. I was thrilled. I was in the R&B room at the auditorium in L.A. during the Grammy's⁷³ and Berry Gordy's mistress, uh, said, "Who you want to meet in the R&B room?" I go, "Anybody?" She goes, "Yeah. Who?" I go, "Uh, Marvin Gaye." She goes, "Come on over." So, we walk in there, and I see Smokey

⁶⁷ The Stylistics are an American soul group that formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1968.

⁶⁸ The Delfonics were an American R&B/soul group that formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1965 and were active until 2022.

⁶⁹ Jerry Butler Jr. (December 8, 1939 –).

⁷⁰ Studio Live USA is located at 416 Geneva Drive, Oviedo, FL 32765.

⁷¹ Eugen Curran Kelly (August 23, 1912 – February 2, 1996).

⁷² William Henry Cosby Jr. (Jul 12, 1937 –).

⁷³ The Grammy Awards are presented by the Recording Academy of the United States to recognize outstanding achievements in the music industry.

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Robinson⁷⁴ and Lionel Richie⁷⁵. And I see Diana Ross⁷⁶. They're all sitting there having cocktails. And – and there I am, looking at Marvin Gaye, who was quite tall actually. And I go, “Marvin...”

[Interview cuts off due to camera issues.]

End of Interview

⁷⁴ William Robinson Jr. (February 19, 1940 –).

⁷⁵ Lionel Brockman Richie Jr. (June 20, 1949 –).

⁷⁶ Diana Ross (March 26, 1944 –).