Casey Lain

Interviewed by Amanda Kowalski

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Transcribed by Amanda Kowalski

**Amanda Kowalski:** Wait a few seconds and let it pick up all the background noise so I can scrub it later. Okay. It is 11:53 on June Fourteenth. And we are at House of Rock. Can you, where's the folder now?

**Dylan Bailey:** The folder?

**Casey Lain:** Is that it, right there?

**DB:** She needs that too.

**AK:**Like I am not prepared? What happened!

**DB:** Do you need the laptop?

**AK:**No, that is for after. I have questions and then I have a form you are going to have to fill out that's legal so that you know, it's going in the repository raw like just the interview itself and then we are going to make the podcast out of it.

**CL:**Works for me.

**AK:**I did remember to bring a pen. Look at me, almost professional. Now that we have got plenty of background noise.

**CL:**(laughs) There we go.

**AK:**(laughs) Uh, can you identify yourself and your job title?

**CL:**Casey Lain, owner and operator of House of Rock.

**AK:**Okay. We are going to start really simple and just tell me something about your childhood.

**CL:**All right, I don’t even know where to begin. Um, I grew up actually born in Corpus Christi at the Spohn Shoreline and grew up on a dairy farm in Sandia, Texas. Um and so that I grew up milking cows and mending fences and all that type of stuff. And then um,  yeah.

**AK:**All right, do you have a favorite memory, like a funny childhood story that you love?

**CL:**Ah there's a few. Probably the ones that stand out most were ones where I was causing trouble with my brother and messing up. Uh, we were racing my cousins one time on three-wheelers, which was against the rules completely because  work vehicle, and my cousin spooked a cow. I ended up hitting it with a three-wheeler and it was a bad situation all the way around so that one always stands out.

**AK:**Ah, you want to tell me what you were like in high school.

**CL:**I moved to Corpus when I was in high school. So, when I got here, I was kind of a friendless, and so I was trying to meet people and I came from Dilley, Texas, where I had gone to school for two years. Very small, I think three thousand people maybe in the in the town at that time. And, so, got to Corpus. Dilley is actually little further behind the times then Corpus was. So, I was still pinch rolling my pants, I was a freshman, so it took me a day or so to realize that people didn't do that anymore. So, came in probably a bit awkward, but played sports and met some people and it was overall good experience.

**AK:**What sports did you play?

**CL:**Football and because of football you join powerlifting and track and so threw the shot put, I was an offensive defensive lineman.

**AK:**Well you are tall. So that makes sense. (laughs)

**CL:**(laughs) yeah yeah yeah

**AK:**Um so, do you have any favorite bands from high school?

**CL:**Yeah, you know what, I do. I don't say that I have one or two. I feel like I've always got two or three bands in my top three list and they kind of rotate but in high school, I was a big Jane's Addiction fan, Social Distortion, Primus. Of course, I was grunge era, so, Alice in Chains and Nirvana and things of that nature.

**AK:**Do you have a memory that connects music like from an early childhood? So, like the very first time you realized music was a thing.

**CL:**Yeah, you know, a couple of them. Yeah, but my parents both—both listen to music and my mom listen to a lot of pop, stuff more so. My dad listen Spanish actually, so there was a lot of that going on. There's always music in the background at my house. So, my mom was doing chores or cleaning, or my dad was relaxing after days of work there was always music kind of playing in the background. And then the  first cassette tape that I ever owned was uh, ZZ Top "Eliminator." My older brother bought for me for my birthday. So that was cool. And then the first album I ever bought with my own money was Red Hot Chili Peppers "Mother's Milk." I think was the first one and after that happened that it was, I started buying as much music as I could and trying to get CDs and vinyls and tapes and everything.

**AK:**What's your favorite way to listen to music?

**CL:**Probably driving, road trips, and every morning my son and I put some music on our we are getting ready to get out the door. So, we like to wake up to music and then on road trips and things that kind of keeps things, yeah.

**AK:**What was the very first concert you went to and can you describe like that experience.

**CL:**First concert more like a show was EJ's and Backdrafts. I would hang out there quite a bit in the mid-late nineties, I guess it was. [Case Pavilion Hall]  but I remember specifically one time there was a band that I was a fan of called Festus. I knew one of the guys in the band and I helped bring their stuff to a show at EJ's. And I tried to get in the back doors as kind of a stagehand type of guy, but that didn’t work too well, so ended up paying the five-dollar cover and came around the front. Um but yeah Sweet Daddy, The Wrong Crowd, Slugbug, Festus, we are all kind of the local scene that was happening at that time. And I saw a bank called Gals Panic. First time I [had] seen a ska band which was really cool. Saw Type O Negative at that little venue. So, there's a bunch of good Texas music that went through EJ's and Backdrafts.

**AK:**I went to all of those shows and I got in for free (laughs).

**CL:**Yeah (laughs), you might have known somebody I didn't.

**AK:**Um, so you talk about Sweet Daddy and other bands, what is your favorite like of that era of Corpus band?

**CL:**It's got to be Sweet Daddy to this day. They are always great. They've done a lot with music and play a lot of good gigs and kind of pave the way for a lot of other bands in Corpus.

**AK:**They also run Soundboards.

**CL:**Yeah true story.

**AK:**What was your first job and how old were you?

**CL:**Oh, you know what? I have to say growing up on a dairy farm. I mean, I've been working, this is a family business forever. But the first paid gig I ever had was a Minute Pawn Shop was on McArdle and Everhart and I was too young to work but I was upstairs sorting through before things went digital looking at tags and pulling things out of pawn and bringing them downstairs and it's kind of stocking shelves.

**AK:**Can you describe some of the other jobs you've held?

**CL:**I haven't had too many, fortunately. But is—young, being in high school the longest job I had was for working for Gill's Landscape Nursery. I was there for a couple of years doing landscaping, checking in trucks, and moving soil around, and working outside from there. From there, I got a job at the Lighthouse Restaurant as a bar back became bartender was there for about a year before going to the Executive Surf Club, which was in '95, Executive Surf Club. So, pretty much then it's been Surf Club, Concrete Street, and House of Rock.

**AK:**Did you have a dream job when you were growing up?

**CL:**I don’t know if I would say dream job, but every kid I think wants to be a fireman at one point or another, a helicopter pilot, things like that, but I considered nursing school for a while right before House of Rock opened up. So, those are the only kind of near misses in my career path.

**AK:**Did you go to any college?

**CL:**Del Mar for a short while. Wasn’t—wasn’t the best student, I think I was asked to leave Mr. Irving's guitar class and that a damper on things. Became a young father and started—just kind of work.

**AK:**What was your first impression going into the Executive Surf Club?

**CL:**It's funny. I thought that the Surf Club, I just know it as a bean burger place as a kid, so I've been there a few times they have poppy seed buns with salsa and beans on a burger and it was awesome. But I didn’t realize I had a bar scene or a music scene. I actually applied at Water Street Oyster Bar or Water Street Seafood Company as a server and at the time they would not take you unless you have a couple years serving experience, which I was shy of that, so they suggested I apply at the Surf Club. They happen to be losing a couple of bartenders one was getting I think promoted to management, one was leaving town, not sure what happened, but anyway there's an opening and uh so yeah, I didn’t realize there was a nightlife there. So, my first impression of my first Friday night ever, I can tell you I worked the outside bar with Johnny Joe who still works there today. He trained me to work the outside bar. I think it was either Aloha Dave and the Tourist or Media Blues, one of those band type bands was playing on that Friday and we just got slammed. I mean all night long and I never knew Surf Club had that kind of a scene, so I knew right away it was going to be different change of pace than the Lighthouse.

**AK:**So, at the Surf Club, it had a lot of bands at the time, how established was the music for the Surf Club when you started?

**CL:**It was established, I think at that time I want to say Robert Earl Keen had played there maybe once or twice. Townes Van Zandt might have been through there at that point. So, there's definitely some history in the making was happening. I don't think that it necessarily hit its stride yet, but it was the groundwork was being laid and there was already a lot of great music that was coming through the Surf Club.

**AK:**What was the first concert that—I mean the first night you told me about Aloha Dave but what was the first concert that you thought, hey, this is really cool at the Surf Club?

**CL:**It's hard—it's hard to tell but there are several moments like that that I've had over the years and I still have them to this day. I'm pleasantly surprised quite a bit by music, um but probably Robert Earl Keen was one of the ones where—I made a purchase and I bought a CD at the table and my GM at the time Thurmond Love gave me some grief over that because I would just giving him grief there was enough rock and roll at the Surf Club.

**AK:**Speaking of Thurman Love, you want to tell me a good Thurman Love story.

**CL:**Oh, none of them are appropriate really, I kid. Thurman was a good boss. He was someone who, man, he worked harder than anybody else worked. He wasn't afraid to finish your job for you. So, if you weren't competent and you weren't getting the job done, he'd rather you just get out of his way and get things done. So, a lot of good work ethic I think came out of Thurman Love. He opened our eyes to just music, a different style of music. Like I said, I grew up listening to the grunge and the punk rock and rock of my time and Thurman was the first one to turn me on to the Robert Earl Keens, the Townes Van Zandst, the Hayes Carlls, the Terri Hendrix, the Trish Murphys and just the songwriter side of things. And I didn’t gravitate to all that stuff really quickly. But over time I did and the Steve Earles and this, my appreciation music just opened up a ton and in return we turned Thurmond Love onto, uh, Tool and Rage Against the Machine and some upcoming things at that time and he was always real open to hear new music himself, so it was kind of a fun relationship in that respect.

**AK:**I went and looked for him on Facebook, and he is singing now.

**CL:**Yeah. Yeah, (both laugh) he's always been—I remember a couple of times support acts would not show up or he'd be in a pinch he jumped at the opportunity to get up there and play. So, he had a good song about the Donut Hole—that does no longer exists, but it was-

**AK:**I miss the Donut Hole so much.

**CL:**Yeah, Corpus Christi's best taco place for years.

**AK:**How did you switch from bartending to management and booking shows?

**CL:**My personal life change. So, I became a young father and because of that I needed to take a better role and maybe get some insurance and its more stability. So, I hit up Thurman for a management position and shortly thereafter, they created a manager-in-training position for Water Street. I think my first project was getting the parking lot, the valet system in place and so took that on eventually had a manager who was let go and one quit and uh a spot opened up and I got that and kind of started working from that way.

**AK:**What are some of the favorite acts that played at the Surf Club?

**CL:**Ah, speaking to Steve Earle, got to say Steve Earle and I think Dead Kennedys. It was a wide spectrum there but those two, it's fun to say that I got to do handful of shows with Hayes Carll, really the all of those bands in that circuit were fun and it was just it was kind of Golden Era.

**AK:**Can you tell me any stories from the Surf Club?

**CL:**Relating to?

**AK:**Anything.

**CL:**The Surf Club was just fun. We were young and so we were in charge of a lot more probably than we should have been left in charge of and did our best—do our best with that responsibility. But it was a fun place. I made some lifelong friends out of the Executive Surf Club and um some—a lot of connections in the music business from Surf Club, but shoot it was just it was just fun times. I mean, I worked with a bunch of  pranksters work with a bunch of music fans work with a bunch of people who like to work hard. You would get your occasional bad apple, but they never seem to last too long. So, good core group. It was good times.

**AK:**Can you tell me about any of the characters beyond Thurman that kind of left a mark on you from that era?

**CL:**Yeah, Shawn Safir was another manager. He was in there between Thurman and as far as ranks on the manager schedule and Shawn booked for about a year. Shawn had a different taste of music but was also a music fan. I think the first sold-out show he booked his Fastball, which is the time up-and-coming Texas band, which was cool. Um, I think Shawn was the one who bought Breedlove to the Surf Club and some other good music. So, um, he left a mark and he has a different style manager than Thurman but also molded me in a good way and he was the kind of guy that would take your idea let you run with it and if it failed you had to accept all that responsibility and if it worked he'd let you take the credit for it. So, he was very fair, and also had to go to work ethic, so.

**AK:**I'm going to throw some names at you, and you tell me what you correlate with that. So, we are going to start easy and say Jack Ingram.

**CL:**Jack Ingram—I met Jack Ingram in the kitchen at the Executive Surf Club. I was back there. I think I was maybe bartending at the time and I turn around and the guy is like standing physically in the kitchen and you don’t walk into a kitchen of a restaurant. So, I'm thinking who is this guy? So, I walk up "Hey, man who can I help you out?" and he says, "Yeah I was going to talk to it to Thurman—is Thurman around?" I was like "Sure and who are you?" and he says, "Man, my name is Jack." I was like all right, so walked in grabbed Thurman, "Hey, some guy named Jack's walk around your kitchen out here," and Thurman starts laughing and of course it turned out to be Jack Ingram at the time and Jack Ingram was always—did great business good guy. He had one agent, Ben Ewing for the longest time um and ah it was—it was good I mean Thurman started booking Jack and then of course over time Jack became—built his crowd, built his audience and at one point was filling that place up. It was fun.

**AK:**Um, Dick Dale.

**CL:**Dick Dale is cool. So, Dick Dale was one of those guys Thurman turned me on to. Didn't know who he was, and then once you find out who Dick Dale is, you realize you do know Dick Dale, he's just American pop culture and Pulp Fiction soundtrack and Misirlou and all the things that song in itself is done. He's a full character. He would talk in the third person and which was always interesting to be on the phone with him. Umm, funny story, Jesse Samudio, was another manager who worked there, read Shawn Safir's handwriting and I guess could not decipher and didn’t understand that it said Dick Dale. He thought it said Rick Rale. So, Jesse went and put Rick Rale on the marquee outside, on all the chalkboards, and all throughout Surf Club it said Rick Rale. (laughs) And I remember Shawn Safir coming in and having a fit with Jesse and Jesse is like "I don’t understand what you are upset with it says Rick Rale." And anyway, Shawn was like, "Who the fuck is Rick Rale?" and Jesse's like, "I don’t know. I don’t know who Dick Dale is." So, anyway that always is a good one. Jesse and I still talk about that story.

**AK:**Cory Morrow.

**CL:**Man, Cory—Cory was the one the guys that was playing Surf Club about the time I started. So, Cory started playing there about the time I started booking maybe a little bit before. Always a good time with Cory. Ah, Cory still plays around. I remember when Cory would play Surf Club but also play across the street a little bit, at ah, is it Tom Foolery's who would do music every once in a while, so yeah.

**AK:**Um, Two Tons of Steel.

**CL:**Two Tons of Steel is also good. Kevin, with his leather guitar um lots of fun and Dennis, ah good group of guys. I think they might still be doing the Two Ton Tuesdays at Gruene Hall, maybe one of the longest regular music nights that I know of and maybe the state of Texas even. I think, what they were The Dead Crickets before there were Two Tons and became Two Tons of Steel and good rockabilly, good swing.

**AK:**Roger Creager.

**CL:**Roger Creager, Corpus boy. Roger Creager was one of those guys too that was always good. He was around about the time I started working there. So, Roger I think we started in with maybe a five- or ten-dollar ticket, grew over time to a twenty-dollar ticket and a full house and Roger Creager is kind of a party band. Became good friends with his father over time and they are just—they are good people and the kind.

**AK:**All right, the last one, Charlie Robison.

**CL:**Charlie's cool. Um, miss Charlie. Charlie is another one. I mean it Charlie probably Pat Green—um, Robert [Robert Earl Keen] who may have had a more of a head start on some of these guys—Cross Canadian Ragweed, um shoot—Mike McClure. There's a bunch of bands—1100 Springs. There's just a ton of them that from—

**AK:**Yeah, I remember seeing Reckless with like less than a hundred people.

**CL:**Yeah Reckless Kelly, great bands. So yeah, there was so many of those guys from that era that were—um man they were changing the face of Texas Music and I think of made their mark to a point music in Texas is now what it is because of the groundwork that those guys did, back in the day. But all of them were all booked out of Texas, they all had Texas agents, Texas management—uh slowly, but surely, they would get big enough to start filling clubs on a regular basis and they started to get booked out of Nashville. So, for a while there is this "Anti-Nashville, we are from Texas" kind of movement, which is always cool, I think it still kind of goes on today from time to time. But yeah, they started doing business in Nashville it’s kind of changed the way that people were buying and selling bands a little bit which is—which is good it help the whole scene, I think.

**AK:**Who started the Spring Break at the Surf Club, where it was fourteen days straight of big bands?

**CL:**I could not even tell you—I could not tell you who started that. I know we had a there's the Tuesday Pat Green or Tuesday Spring Break for years was a Pat Green show and we just kind of filled it in but even to this day that's been a good time frame to book good touring bands because the South By [South By Southwest] and there's a lot of bands that are in the state already. So, we are able to kind of pull a lot of bands are looking for gigs. Seven days a week. So, you have a little more of a variety to choose from, but you combine that with school's out, we are coastal community. It just seemed to work great.

**AK:**Did you ever go home during those two weeks?

**CL:**Oh, yeah. Yeah, no. I have always lived close to downtown (both laugh) Surf Club was my home.

**AK:**Um, I remember radio stations would put a travel trailer in the parking lot and they would stay there for the whole two weeks, so it was a big deal in that time. And do you think that Corpus has changed from that era or is it still doing the same thing?

**CL:**I think it has changed a lot. There is a lot more to do. There's a lot more entertainment and that's a whole other conversation. But just—there from cell phones and technology in your hip pocket—um to the way you can go see a movie now and have a cold beer at the same time. So, there's so many ways to get out there and be entertained. I think the whole industry has changed quite a bit. Corpus itself was also changed. We are not the downtown Spring Break party hub that maybe we were at one point, but I've seen a lot more families coming to downtown with the add-ons that the aquarium is doing, and the Lexington and the museums and the new scooters you can cruise around downtown. I mean, there's a lot of things to do with families down here. So, I'm seeing like an influx of families over spring break and a little bit less of a party town and I also feel like that, rightfully, so the laws have changed and D.W.I.s., there are steeper penalties and fines and things and so people are more aware. There's been more campaigns to let people know—about getting around and driving and so the—I think the party scene just in itself has change definitely.

**AK:**Can you describe the transition from the Surf Club to Concrete Street Amphitheater?

**CL:**Yeah, Surf Club was cool. Thurman was a good guy. I—I want to say Thurman was self-taught on how to structure a deal, how to book a band. And so, we did all of our promoting was done in house. We didn’t have any outside promoters coming in and renting the venue out per se for their own benefit or their own show or event. So, that was one big difference. Concrete Street had partners and the deal structures were a little bit different and your expense to list, and your expense items are a little bit different. So, I learned a lot at that point. Surprisingly though, there was a lot of the same agents that were working—that I've been working with—uh were also working with that amphitheater. And so, for example, a lot of people have grown-up in the industry the same time I started. One of the guys, Brian Hill who was an agent for Robert Earl Keen for a long time. One of the first big shows that Concrete Street I was involved in was Toby Keith and well Brian Hill is Toby Keith's agent. And so, I learned real quick that this kind of ancestral business. You have one agent who represents Toby Keith, but he also represents Jack Ingram and Robert Earl Keen at the time. So, um, those are vastly different shows and the way that they are managed, in the way that they tour, and in the way that they promote so that was interesting to see you. So, a lot of ways Concrete Street was just the same thing as the Surf Clubs or just more zero's, more before the decimal and so yeah anyway.

**AK:**So, what was the first show at Concrete Street that you kind of pulled together on your own?

**CL:**I should have done a better job of writing things down, but we probably did anywhere from sixty to eighty shows a year at Concrete Street. So, in a lot of those shows we had partners on and so it's kind of hard to tell which was the actual first. I do remember the first show that I was extremely passionate about and really felt like I had to fight for was uh Social Distortion. Of course, I try to get those guys at the Surf Club years earlier and they were too big to play and didn’t have an interest in Corpus. And so, I'd already been kind of knocking on that door for years. And so, by the time I actually got that call and the opportunity and there's no way I can let that opportunity slide. So, the general manager and I went back and forth on that one. We got the show and I think they play there a couple of times since then.

**AK:**How did you grow in this position to where you are now?

**CL:**It's a history and is doing things and getting outside your comfort zone a little bit. I started off answering phones as a bartender and that's where I started getting relationships with booking agents and agents' assistants. That was before we had email and people were not texting and using cell phones. And so, you really called that's how I got business done. So, I was able to create a relationship over the phone with them and establish kind of a rapport. Then when I took on a management role, we just kind of started, instead of answering the phones, we just started taking it to the next level of booking deals. And then like I said, fast forward all these years to Concrete Street and I'm working with those same people—fast-forward to House of Rock, I still work with a lot of these same agents. And so, it's just a matter of developing that history and buying as much talent as you can—puts you on a— ut you on the radar a little bit with agents and agencies.

**AK:**Are there any bands that you have tried to get but could not get?

**CL:**Oh, yeah.

**AK:**And are disappointed in not having?

**CL:**Yeah, that happens on a weekly basis. I mean we are limited in Corpus Christi by our geography for one. Texas is a huge music state and it's a big state physically. So, you don’t need to come to Corpus Christi. When you can hit Lubbock, El Paso, Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio and all these other cities that might route. If you are coming to Corpus Christi or South Padre its more fuel—it is out of the way. So, there's a lot of opportunity that I wish that we had. And we are able to get more. But there is also bands that, I try to put a square peg in a round hole and so you swing for the fence. And there's certain bands I try to get here, that we are just probably too small of a venue to get and a lot of times bands don't have a history in the market, and you are not a part of their business plan so to speak and they really are not interested in coming down this way. So there's a lot of offers we put out, a lot of we knock on doors, we you get used to the answer of "Hey,  can't do it this time," but, uh, we keep trying because at some point you have that Social Distortion situation, to where you've been calling me for years, I keep telling you no, and guess what we need a— we need a date in Texas and you are the spot. So, you never know when they’re going to come back around and that happens quite a bit.

**AK:**Um, are there any characters that worked for Concrete Street that were memorable like Thurman Love?

**CL:**Oh, yeah, the still are—still people and a lot of people that have influenced me. Yeah, I mean really there the whole the whole team over there. Mark Schaberg is the general manager. He still general manager and still is in charge the booking and he's always done a good job of hiring good people. So, Scot Beeman was a guy that does a production guy over there who taught me a lot about production and production advance and I speak the language and how to understand the production side of things. And so, he still works in the industry and we still chat from time to time. But yeah, there's a whole slew of people there's a guy named Robin we used to call "Fingers" because he had the biggest hands you'd ever seen on a person. And he was just—man, he'd climb all over that stage and was fearless up on heights. It was hard to watch him work—because it was—go out on a limb. But there's a lot of a lot of stories and things and people but yeah, there's several.

**AK:**One of the people that I remember from Concrete street is Frank Cipra.

**CL:**Yeah Frank.

**AK:**Super Frank. Do you have any stories about him?

**CL:**Oh, yeah, once again going back to the most of them probably are not appropriate for the podcast. Frank is a good guy, Frank—met Frank, I think he was with John Evans when I met him at the Executive Surf Club actually. So, I've known Frank before the Concrete Street era. Um, he was tour manager and he tour managed a handful of bands and then he ended up at one point moving the Corpus and being a production manager for Concrete Street and Brewster Street for a couple of years. A few years maybe. Um and at that point, we reconnected and became better friends and and then whenever Fiesta de la Flor started here in Corpus, I hired Frank to be the production manager stage manager for Fiesta de la Flor, to work with me on that event. So, we started actually working on some of these gigs together and we did four of those events together. And yeah, so the—we had a ritual at the end of Fiesta de la Flor, after building a stage for a week and getting our ass handed to us for two days with set changes of Fiesta de la Flor and taking the entire stage down and getting everything off the property. It was—you hit Brewster Street for all you can eat crawfish and beer on a Sunday afternoon, so.

**AK:**Um, can you describe the difference between booking at Concrete Street and Brewster Street, then Surf Club?

**CL:**Yeah, Surf Club—Brad Lomax was amazing and gave me the reins and just said “don’t lose money.” And so that was the main thing, of course there were guidelines and it's—Surf Club is a family place. And so, we had to watch the style of music that we booked but I was able to make deals kind of on the fly. And I was working a lot with the same agents that I worked with on a regular basis. And so that rapport was there so we could get deals done a book multiple dates at one time without having to go back and forth. When I went to Concrete that's the first time, I had a boss who was wanting to be involved. So, everything that I did, I had to run by somebody else and that becomes challenging sometimes because in this business a lot of bands are looking to book something now or this week. Or, they are just checking things off a list. They've got to book thirty dates, and they need thirty offers, and they need it right now. And so, there's a little bit of that—going on and just learning the different room expenses. Surf Club we got down to where we could run that place on a dime. It took very little bit of resources to turn a good show in that place. Concrete Street is so big, you are talking barricade people, and police security, and ambulances. And so, there is a lot more to it from a staffing standpoint. Um, so, that was another something challenge is how to build an offer and how to budget for—how are we going to make money on the show and if this show does well—was a little bit of a learning curve but end of the day it's all the same. There's just more numbers at the end. You have staffing, there's always a line item for that but there's just more staffing Concrete Street, so.

**AK:**What is the most memorable show that you put on at Concrete Street?

**CL:**Man, I sound like a broken record, but I want to go back to Social Distortion. I'm going to keep bringing that one up and it was more of the show—that was a show that I've been wanting to book for a long time. But it also worked out to where one of my best friend's weddings was going to be happening. And so that turned out to be a surprise bachelor party. So, it was a show but was also there's about fifteen of my friends that got to come down and we got to watch soundcheck and I think the rehearse the day before so we got to look at a little bit of that and we went out and had a good time. So, that was probably one of the ones that stands out the most, as far as being memorable. But there's a lot of stuff. I mean going back that Toby Keith Shaw on the main stage. I was part of the first show that we had real production, there was cranes involved in certain things to hold walls up and there is a big—Ford F-150 up on the stage and just a bunch of cool stuff, you don’t get to see it there Surf Club style shows.

**AK:**At Concrete Street, you can book larger acts, but does some of them fall flat? So, what would be the most memorable kind of flop?

**CL:**Oh, that's tough. There's a few and it's tied whether it is the weather, there was a "Blues on the Bay" one time of the BB King that we thought was going to do really well and the weather hit and it just, man, it ruined it and nobody came out. BB King wasn’t an expensive act. We had put a lot of effort and time and marketing and stuff into it. So, that's probably one of the ones there's a few out there that still come around. I don't want to taint the waters, and then call people out but there's a few bands out there that we were thought were going to do great that for whatever reason just didn't do well at all and that happens, and that's the hard part and you can do well and you can do really poorly with some of this. You did ask a second ago about most memorable shows that I booked and there was one that I feel like was probably the best festival I've ever put together never happen because of Hurricane Rita scare. So, we ended up canceling show but it was a concert with the Black Crowes—it was Black Crowes, Lucinda Williams, Del Castillo, Los Lonely Boys, Blues Traveler and um shoot there's a couple other bands on their that I'm drawing a blank on but I always felt like that was— Black Crowes in itself—I think that is a Corpus style show and Blues Traveler was doing well at the time, and Los Lonely Boys were on the up and up, and then Lucinda Williams I've always been a huge fan of and I thought that was a good eclectic group and then about a week before that happened Hurricane Rita hit the gulf and we start canceling shows. We'd actually just opened House of Rock at that time. We had Chris Duarte scheduled to play here and that show got cancelled due to Hurricane Rita, so.

**AK:**And Hurricane Rita didn’t really even affect Corpus.

**CL:**Hurricane Rita missed us completely it—it affected us in ways, the that scar me to this day, but it never really happened.

**AK:**Weather plays an effect on any outdoor venue, but does it also play an effect? Like you said it canceled the show here at House Rock and this is closed. So, is that always a risk in the summer here?

**CL:**Yeah it is, and I mean it really would have to be something catastrophic to cancel a show and we look at it from it's a safety standpoint. There's a hurricane or the big storm coming, and they are calling for tornadoes or fifty mile-an-hour winds. Whatever it is, these guys are traveling to the show ran in a van and trailer they get stuck on the road— it's just not my shelter for them. And then of course, just as a responsible business owner, you don’t want to call a bunch of people out to a party and middle of a hurricane. So that always is a factor obviously if you are outdoors, it affects it more. I'm spoiled now with House of Rock, because I wake up every day and if it's a little if it's a rain cloud it does not bother me, if it's a storm I've had noticed that a storms coming. But the Surf Club you can wake up and sunny day is halfway through the skies go dark, it would just become—show's a rain or shine. You are on the hook financially for it and even at the show happens, you are still having to pay everybody but the crowds not coming out, so it's always a little bit of a gamble.

**AK:**And in the summer here in Corpus. Is there any kind of flak from bands? Especially that have to play in the heat.

**CL:**Yes, and no, I mean, I think a lot of them kind of know what they are getting into, you just have to as a promoter—I mean to get a roof and get the right equipment out there so that they don’t have to stand right under the sun directly, communicate with them ahead of time. This is what it's going to be like when you get here that way, they are mentally prepared. Um—but—um yeah, I can say we've—I've really had to cancel just a handful of shows due to weather, a very few, maybe five, total over the past twenty some odd years of doing outdoor shows, which is not too bad. A lot of shows have been affected by weather, people think it's going to rain they don’t show up, so.

**AK:**Uh, the first ZiegFest [Ziegenbock Music Festival] here was on North Beach and you put that on and a hurricane hit—but it still went on was there any challenges for that one?

**CL:**Yes. In fact, we are approaching the ten-year anniversary of that date. It's in July and the promoter who is a friend of mine, um just sent me an invite and we are going to go out there and have a beer and stand on North Beach Festival site and tell stories. So, I'll let you know when that happens.

**AK:**I was working for one of the radio stations doing that concert and they put me at the hotel. That's right next to it. It's now the Fajitaville Hotel.

**CL:**Yeah, yeah, right on.

**AK:**But I'm going to tell you right now that hotel wasn’t nice when they booked me in it and  the rain from the hurricane came all the way into the bed. (both laugh)

**CL:**Yeah, that was a bit—it was and like any concert, it was a gamble, getting it out there and it and you run you into your own obstacles doing a festival in general and then you throw a hurricane scare on top of it. It just—it was a disaster, but like said, we pulled it off. The story goes, Wednesday or so was when the storm hit and so—it hit north of us farther north than they anticipated which was good. Can't remember what storm it was at this point might have been.

**AK:**I think it was Dottie. [Hurricane Dolly, July 2008]

**CL:**It might have been. So anyway, we end up the entire festival site, which we have been planning for about six months, parking, stage placement, vendors, load in, load out, traffic plan, everything we've been working on changed in the matter of two days before the festival. And so, we had to rework all of that. Thursday, we get out there and the festival sites underground. So, we literally had to rent pumps, get shovels, and put sump pumps in the field and pump the ocean back into the ocean, um which we did. And then Friday the sun came out and Thursday the sun was out. So, the place got pretty dry. And the cool thing about North Beach is—the the ground out there is kind of shell-y and so it's not muddy as much as some parts of town. So, it dried out, we got the festival up and we got it running and it just it tanked. And every hotel—we are calling the hotels and what your capacity like and everybody was just like— people canceling rooms left and right. It turned out to be two of the most beautiful days all summer for that festival. But like I said earlier once you get to a weather scare, it's hard to recover from that.

**AK:**I think I was in that hotel from Thursday night through Sunday and I watched y'all put it all together and your brother was running all the sound and he was laying a piece of wood. They were carrying something and then moving that piece of wood (laughs) so that everything could get moved in while y'all were pumping the water out and that's the kind of dedication that a lot of people don't understand that those into this.

**CL:**That's the—that's the first off-site festival I ever was a part of the didn’t have concert infrastructure. So, generators, staging, I mean and— and man, you learn so much doing that and then when the hurricane came you had to kind of improvise and so it is probably—looking back as like one of the best things for me, I hate to say it but it taught me a lot about how to do business, it taught me a lot about, um, managing people's expectations and the keeping the weather into it and—and that plywood system you are talking about, I still use that to this day, but the difference is now I know to bring the plywood on day one (both laugh). It's makes it an easier push through the dirt, so.

**AK:**Yeah, that was a one of my most memorable weeks to because I was stuck out there but it also showed that I think something that a lot of people put off at Corpus have the potential to host something like that and have people show up because you said all those things canceled but the day of the show there were still so many people that showed up.

**CL:**Yeah, I know—people, it wasn’t a total flop as the sense that—we had I don’t know if it was a thousand or fifteen hundred. I mean there was a good amount of people, it was—less than we anticipated and less that everybody to hope for but there are still a good showing and there's a lot of dedicated fans that came out. I think more than anything, we just missed the out-of-town travelers, we kind of were hoping to get some from that—that area and then the second year we did ZiegFest same location, different layout and um, I think we overpaid the headliner and whatever else was against us that year but ZiegFest then went to Whataburger Field and now it still happens at Concrete Street is so it's on a third venue, but it's still living. So, it's ten years of ZiegFest Corpus.

**AK:**Ten years of great times. Is there anything in the production side or kind of backstage from concrete street that you remember like good stories?

**CL:**Yeah, it's funny. I feel like backstage. Generally, if you do it right, it's a working area and not a party place. So, I always feel like there's this big misconception and people wanting to get backstage. And once you get backstage, if you are in the way you are just told to get out of the way, and that's typical almost anywhere you go. So, I try to keep a working backstage as much as possible being a sometimes-fun things happen. I'm a huge Clutch fan and we did a show was called Sounds of the Underground at Concrete Street and I was a bunch of metal bands and rock bands and one point Clutch setup a kind of makeshift stage backstage and started playing some acoustic jams and had some other members of some other bands on tour sit around and play with them and it was real organic and it was real cool and it was probably the coolest things I've seen. That— hat's one of those—that didn’t happen everyday backstage, but I think that's the kind of stuff people are hoping to see, if they get back there.

**AK:**Do you think the opening of Concrete Street kind of elevated Corpus' music scene and how?

**CL:**I think it did, before Concrete Street, there wasn’t anything currently and it was that size that was doing shows. A few years prior you had Johnnyland or Texas Sky that was doing stuff and I was pretty comparable to, um, to Concrete Street as far as capacity and stuff wise. Concrete in my opinion is nicer facility than Johnnyland was and the infrastructures there, the location, part of town that it's in, it's got the parking and it's an entertainment area. So, I think it definitely elevated music and any time a music venue opens I think that that happens. It challenges everybody else who is already in the business to step up their game a little bit and make sure that it is going to keep working.

**AK:**Did you ever go to any shows at Johnnyland?

**CL:**I did, I saw Pantera there. Um, that was a brutal show, one the most brutal pits I've seen in Corpus ever. And then I saw Prong play there one time on Halloween and I can't remember the play there with, but it was it was a member of being a fun show.

**AK:**My first show that I ever went to was at Johnnyland, it was Ronnie James Dio.

**CL:**Oh, right on.

**AK:** Yeah, I was probably twelve.

**CL:**Yeah. Yeah did a show with Dio at Concrete Street. It was fun.

**AK:**Johnnyland is also way out in the sticks compared to where Concrete Street, so you said location plays a part. Do you think it could be a deterrent as well for where Concrete Street is located?

**CL:**Oh, yes, and no, I think there's never going to be a place that's close and convenient for everybody. So, that it is a distance, especially if you are on the island or on the south side or something, but I feel like I can go down the downtown Corpus Christi rabbit hole for a long time as well. But downtown Corpus has, um, pretty much all of the major event venues in town from music venues, to theaters, to ball parks, and restaurants and eateries, and a good view. So it's a cool place to be located if you are a venue because you come down for the show and before the show you can go out and get dinner, you walk on the sea, and you do what you are doing and enjoy the space.

**AK:**So, we've talked a lot about Concrete Street, but we kind of mentioned Brewster Street. How how involved are you in the opening of Brewster?

**CL:**So, they—so House of Rock open 2005, um, Brewster Street opened in 2006 and so, the first year that they were working on it I wasn’t involved at all. I was really focusing on House of Rock and then when they open Brewster Street, I started booking the entertainment for them. Um and I was booking at that time House of Rock, Concrete Street and Brewster as kind of a full-time gig and I did that for a year or maybe two somewhere in that timeframe and then we kind of mutually agreed to high five and go our separate ways. And I stop booking those venues on a full-time basis and still from time to time if there's a fish that's too big for House of Rock or something that is a better fit, in one of those other venues than I will still book some entertainment in those places.

**AK:**So, those three venues House of Rock, Concrete Street, and Brewster Street, all hold different numbers of people, and Concrete Street books has two stages, so one smaller. Does the size of the venue play into who gets booked where?

**CL:** Absolutely. Absolutely, and the bigger the room, the more the cost are to cover. So, if you are going to put, let's say two hundred people and House of Rock, we can do that and have a pretty good night. But two thousand—[he corrected himself] two hundred people on the patio of Concrete Street and you are losing money, so it definitely plays a role in it's a good—it's a good growth pattern here several bands of started off playing venues such as Surf Club or House of Rock or Dr. Rockits, at the time and then kind of graduated to the Brewster Street level and then the Concrete Street-level.

**AK:**Do you know the capacity at Surf Club right now?

**CL:**I don't, so I want to say, and I mean it's been fifteen years since I was there for longer, but I want to say we sold a six hundred as a standing room. I know that some remodels have been done and things have moved around since then so I would imagine it's probably about the same as House of Rock. We are a five hundred sellable capacity standing room only. And you can fit five-fifty or so once you count the bands and the personnel and things like that

**AK:**Six hundred at the Surf Club is uncomfortable.

**CL:**It is. it is. Yeah—no, saying—and being able to do it and being being smart about it is different. Brewster streets about eleven hundred capacity. I want to say the parking lots close to two. Pavilion at Concrete is three-thousand capacity and I want to say it ten for the Amphitheater. They might have scaled that back as well. But I think that's what we did for like Evanescence and Nickelback back in the day of I think it was ten-thousand capacity.

**AK:**I've been to a couple of sold-out shows at Concrete Street and I think you are right at ten.

**CL:**Yeah, I want to say same as American Bank Center is that—and they have got the Selena Auditorium.

**AK:**Bank center is at seventy-five hundred.

**CL:**Seventy-five hundred, so a little less and then they have the Selena Auditorium, which I don’t that's fifteen hundred or—

AK: Yeah, it is not huge.

**CL:**Maybe two thousand seated.

**AK:**So, in Corpus, we have a variety of capacities, that's important because each band looks a different size. What would you think is the perfect size for Corpus?

**CL:**Hey, that's just personal preference to be honest. I feel like even places that's a Zeros which is not around anymore. But now Boozers is kind of taking on that role of what Zeros was. And it's a smaller capacity venue and they are all important because I think a lot of bands that have played Zeros or Boozers will get to a point if they need a larger venue then House Rocks a natural fit and the same for the other venues we just spoke about. Um personally I like where I'm at. I like being able to know your guests and at this size venue I could know who to expect for the different genres of shows and—and kind of who to market to. I know my staff because my staff works here on a regular basis. If you get a large venue a lot of times you have part-time staff and it's hard to maintain them and train them and keep them around where House of Rock, we have a system and our small family. And so I like the size of House of Rock, there are times I wish the venues was actually a little bit smaller just for the for overhead reasons and it's a 500 cap venue, takes a few hundred dollars in labor just to staff it properly in certain shows so, um, but yeah. And Brewster Street is obviously a place for that, and they stay pretty busy and fill that place up regular, so I think having the variety is the best thing for Corpus.

**AK:**How did you get involved with House of Rock?

**CL:**There's a couple of guys that I've known for a while in the bar business. Who invited me to the table and said they had an opening? They'd opened it up and we are booking shows and had a partner but didn’t have the experience I had on the music side of things and so I was able to come in and kind of sweat equity and work my way into the partnership.

**AK:**What was the first show you booked for House of Rock?

**CL:**Man, like I said earlier I wish I'd have taken better notes. I don’t even remember. I can tell you the first touring bands that I know that I booked was Powerman 5000 and Clutch and those were booked through agents that I had previously worked with the Concrete Street. And yeah, those are the first two touring bands that we did. I remember the Powerman 5000, um, the opening band was called Wicked Wisdom. And that's the band that Jada Pinkett Smith was singing for and so she came in—there's a little bit of like starstruck-ness and it's going on, because Jada Pinkett Smith, so that was cool in itself. And shortly after that, we had Shooter Jennings and Shooter Jennings was dating Drea de Matteo at the time who was a Sopranos star and actress and so they had just started dating. But she ended up showing up and so Drea de Matteo is here with Shooter Jennings. And so, these stars hanging out at House of Rock happen for about three months in a row and there was somebody else that kind of along the same lines that were like—why are these people coming House Rock suddenly. So, there's little bit of a buzz that kind of helped us out in the beginning. But yeah, those three acts are probably some the first three touring bands that I remember.

**AK:**The first sold-out show here was Clutch. Do you have any memories of that?

**CL:**First, sold out show here was Slightly Stoopid.

**AK:**It wasn't Clutch?

**CL:**Clutch has never sold out House of Rock. Yeah.

**AK:**All right, Slightly Stoopid.

**CL:**Yeah. No, it's all good. It's all good. I do have memories, but I can tell you Hinder was almost the first sold out show at House of Rock and we are about fifteen people shy of selling out. And Slightly Stoopid in that it being the first man to sellout about a week later, which was awesome because I was more of a Slightly Stoopid fan than a Hinder fan, nothing against those guys, this is personal preference.

**AK:**Slightly Stoopid is fun.

**CL:**Yeah, it's like a Slightly Stoopid was great. So, Slightly Stoopid sold-out show first sold-out show. It went off well. I think our air conditioners might have broke. It was super-hot in here. The band was way cool, way understanding of it. And it was their first time to Corpus, and it was a sellout show. So, everybody's kind of on this cloud nine and walking on air and then after the show, we are breaking down House of Rock and there was a guy Austin Smith as a good friend of mine, door guy that worked here, and we engage in some friendly horseplay. Which is actually a horseplay the been going on for years that we were slowly stopping but this night, we are excited, we start a horse-playing and Austin ended up breaking his leg on accident. And so, we went from having this great night, everything's awesome. We just had our first sold-out show their no incidents. There's nobody got in fights. Nobody got threw out of here and then Austin breaks his leg in the incident of horseplay. So that's my memory of her sold-out show at House of Rock.

**AK:**When you first started booking shows here, did you have any visions of what you wanted to do? Was there like a plan or did it just organically kind of evolved?

**CL:**Yeah, I was humbled when it first opened because I had a plan and I what I was used to at this size of the venue was a Surf Club closed at eleven during the week, midnight on Friday and Saturday door started it open at seven. The opener went on an eight and a nine o'clock the headliner went on and that formula just work. So, I thought we'd have earlier shows. I thought we would have a wider variety of shows and more songwriters and things that were, um, not that we did at the Surf Club because I was actually trying to steer clear a little bit of a lot of that stuff just out of respect and—and friendliness of being at a neighbor. But there was a lot of things that were not getting booked at that time at the Surf Club. So—I made a run at some songwriter shows and different things and I just could not come to work here. An early crowd, it didn’t have an early crowd here. The crowd here got here at nine o'clock, ten o'clock at night - so shows are going till two a.m. Which is just super late to be on your wits until that time. So, I learned to kind of go with the crowd and we had a harder crowd of people that wanted to hear heavier music and there's a void for that. There was never a venue this size that was doing punk, and rock, and hardcore shows and so we were very heavy in those genres in the beginning and anything else I tried wasn't really working. It wasn't until probably year three to where we had remodeled the venue a little bit, softened it up, painting the walls, it became less black, less of a rock bar, and more of a venue to where some of those songwriter show started to pay off and and some of the reggae show started coming through. We were able to kind of open up our horizons a little bit musically, but that was something that I thought out of the get gate—out of the get-go, we needed to be—was play good music whatever that is, whatever genre that is good music and get touring bands, and we did that but we were stuck in one genre of just heavy and hard music. Which was fun, but it was also, um, there's only so many fans in this town that can support that kind of music and you can't do that seven days a week and have that same fan base come in seven days a week. So, we had to broaden our horizons and kind of really shoot for different genres, and different types of events, and burlesque shows, and things that are just kind of outside the box a little bit, so yeah that definitely took a mind of its own at some point and the kitchen didn’t come until nine years into it. So, we didn’t serve food until five years ago. That's something, if hindsight being 20/20. I would've started off with the kitchen, and it may be marketed things a little bit different but I'm happy from where we are and where we came from and we did it with very few resources and just kind of grew over time. Every year we try to make some sort of improvement to the property, some sort of add on to the business plan or an improvement to what's already existing, and that's worked for us.

**AK:**Did you cultivate the culture of this venue or was it just regulars that came in and just kind of helped shaped up with you?

**CL:**Man. It's regulars, they came in. So, there were there was an existing fan base of House of Rock. When I partnered—I partnered about a month and a half after the effort opened. So, there was already a fan base. There wasn’t a ton of people but there's a handful of regulars that came from day one. And we ended up, put some beer specials on kind of in their favorite things that they liked and that kind of grew. And I would say that most of those people still come around but most of them have kids now and are in relationships and have moved on and grew up a little bit, but they still come around and still give us support. But we were very fortunate that we had a group of—really it was musicians in this town. Musicians and artists that kind of help support us to the early years.

**AK:**Did you realize that House of Rock would be successful or were you worried? Because Corpus had not had a rock venue.

CL: I honestly wasn’t looking that far down the road because it was a struggle just to keep it running, every day. I mean I used to joke, and it was kind of like some seriousness to it, but I don’t know if I was going to be here three more days at one point let alone three more months or three more years or thirteen years. I mean, it really—it's kind of I didn’t have the foresight to see that far down the road. I mean, we had our power turned off a couple of times here at House of Rock, and almost had my truck repossessed personally and I was like, single father and my mom thought I was crazy I think for coming down here and trying to make this happen, but we are in a good spot now so that's kind of history. But yeah, I didn’t think it was going to be what it was or last as long so I'm extremely proud of Corpus for supporting it and the staff are coming together and making it happen and that group of regulars are still comes around and plus the new ones. We've been very fortunate to fit in downtown.

**AK:**How has House Rock grown and changed over the years? What's the biggest difference?

**CL:**Man, our crowds change. A lot of it’s our food, the music changed and all the things I was kind of touched on. I mean, we really come a long way. We do catering and private events and parties. Now, we've had weddings happen here. We've had, shoot, everything from bachelor/bachelorette parties to five-year-old birthday parties and graduation parties and everything in between, so that's grown, that part of the business has grown a lot obviously food. Like I mentioned we have a lunch rush now, we have a happy hour crowd now, so there's a demographics have changed but we don't do as much the hardcore scene as we used to. Going back to Boozer's being open, those guys kind of fill that void and do a good job with that. But we do want occasion have that, we also have great punk rock coming up still. So, we try to keep our books full and with well-rounded music, but we are able to do more and more indie music and different things than that might not have worked I think  fourteen years ago.

**AK:**My son had his three-year-old birthday.

**CL:**Yeah. Well the first ones ever, that was awesome.

**AK:**That was back when all you had was popcorn.

**CL:** He was a trendsetter. True story and pickles I think there for a while.

**AK:** Yes.

**CL:** Whenever we remembered to pick them up from the store.

**AK:**So, can you talk about some of the characters that have kind of embodied House Rock over the years, you can tell names because most of them will be in the podcast.

**CL:**Yeah yeah, right on, man, you go back to the old customers. I would not be doing House of Rock justice if I didn’t mention Arnulfo, the singer to Drastic Actions. I met an Arnulfo years ago at another bar. We hit it off and became friendly with each other at that point used to see him at shows back in the day. But he stood out as a character you walked in the door and you would notice Arnulfo, he is probably one of the sweetest guys that come—that at that I know but his kind of also the same time a crusty punk rocker, which gives him his character. But he, we started serving two-dollar Lone Star. We had a guy named Chris Hastings who did some work for us and ran some cables and went to settle up with him and he said all I ask is you serve Lone Star, so he did me a solid favor. So, I put a permanent two dollar Lone Star on special, thinking nobody's going to drink Lone Star, except Chris Hastings. Well, turns out Arnulfo also liked Lone Star, it turns out every punk rocker this town I think wanted to be like Arnulfo, sit at House of Rock and drink two dollar Lone Star. So, at one point we became the largest Lone Star retailer in the state of Texas, which was cool because I think the only sell it in Texas which means we were number one in the world, so we used to claim on to that or claim that—that fame but Arnulfo still comes around he's got family and his sings in a band. He's got a show coming up here actually, but his daughter is now in Chicas Rock and so she's also a young up-and-coming rocker so. He really changed or not changed but shaped the former House of Rock in many ways, from out of the get-go, but Arnulfo also one of probably thirty people used to come in here on a regular basis, you yourself with taking the pictures and photographs and I tell people all the time. I think there's a guy Shutter Steve, that used took a few pictures and you took a bunch of pictures and those are still hanging up on the wall and still get a lot of looks, so that's history that we preserved, you preserved. I never thought we were going to once again be here this long so it's cool to have those things still up there.

**AK:**Pretty sure all of those pictures are about to be donated to the archives.

**CL:**Yeah.

**AK:**All the digital copies are going to be put in so soon they'll be up in the repository. You can show people, Hey, this is what 2006 at House of Rock looked like.

**CL:**Yeah. I've got to mention to Jessica Lyttle and in the Evie Kjelstrom, they started the burlesque shows here and they came in it was at a time we were trying to figure out new stuff and what we can do, and they produce the After Dark Review Burlesque for many years. And I think I was the first time that type of stuff that happened in Corpus and recent history anyway. And that also open doors people started hitting us up to do—did a couple of plays here, and a different other kinds of visual art, and Vince Alvarado with the Friends and Lovers art show, back in 2006 I want to say brought us the idea of hanging art and we figured out a way to hang art on these old walls and he bring in thirty, forty, fifty artists and we'd make a night of it. And so a lot of that art is still up on the walls and we made a lot of connections that way so it goes back to earlier statement, the local art community and the local music community is been what's kind of molded House of Rock into being what it is and it's all happened very organically. It's one thing I really like we don't have a lot of generic beer signs up on our walls or things. Pretty much, we didn’t have a budget in the beginning, so if something's on the wall, it was probably donated by local photographer, a local artist, a local musician, or somebody who's in the art scene and Corpus. And so, we have a lot of unique stuff up on the walls that you won't find anywhere because they are one-of-a-kind type stuff. So, I think that really helped mold our business.

**AK:**When you remodeled, probably one of the first remodels, you started turning music instruments into lights. Is there anything else that's kind of unique just about like how you vision the place would look from that black really scary kind of place where it was too—(laughs) it's much brighter now, so—

**CL:**Yeah. I know, its—lighting is crazy. We just lit up the outside and the sidewalks and it's only been up for about a month the other day I turned it off just to kind of see what it looked like because I had forgotten, and it was so sketchy I don’t  know how been a business so long without lighting on the sidewalk. Bryan Tierce was an old friend of mine, he worked for a beer company when I was at Executive Surf Club. And when I—we open House of Rock, we are sitting here one night and I didn’t have a budget, didn’t have any money to spend but I need a new lighting fixtures. And so, we were trying to figure out how could we turn a guitar into lights. So we came up with this kind of mental concept of how it would work and I ended up—I think on MySpace telling people, "Hey, if you bring an instrument to House of Rock you get into the show without paying a cover" and we picked a show and we got a few guitars show up and some drums, some snare drums. And Brian took like a prototype to guitar, uh it was actually a bass guitar I had and turn that into our first guitar light—was like a prototype. And then from there we built something five or six more of those things and kind of put them around and from that idea sparked the we have the old kind of warehouse lights like china cap lights and replace those with snare drums and just put a gel from a stage light on the bottom of it to make our in our drum lights which are cool. Fast forward a few years and those lights on the outside of the building we just put up are LED lights and on they are weatherproof, but our electrician wanted to go one extra level and he wanted to protect it from the Sun and he was going to fabricate these round discs to put on the backside of them just to keep them in the shade. And so how big of a disk you talking about—and he was all pretty much exactly like this pizza pan. So now if you go outside, we've incorporated thirteen pizza pans into our thirteen lighting fixtures, and so the theme of creating lights out of instruments and food items and whatnot or kitchen utensils are still ongoing.

**AK:**Can you describe some your favorite memories of House of Rock?

**CL:**The first sold-out show despite Austin's leg. It makes a good story these days but that was a good feeling to be able to put—a to put something into this space and do well with it. Every year that we are still open I think is an experience. I've got an awesome staff. I've got two of my managers have been with me nearly ten years both of them started out an hourly position and both of them love being in the music industry and being able to do what they do. So, I'm fortunate to have people on my side so, that's something that stands out when I think of House of Rock. It's cool to be a, I wouldn't say we are yet necessarily a household name in Corpus, but for years I would go to some place that I would wear a House of Rock shirt, a logo and people would say "Well, what is that—what is that place?" And now a lot of times I get people say, "Hey man, y'all have good pizza," "Hey, my son goes to your place" or "Hey, I heard y'all had this cool thing happening" and that's always a feel-good. Whenever you feel like you are making a difference in the community. I just feel like everybody remembers their first concert they went to. And so hopefully we are providing that type of experience. Also, on that kick of this memory lane, there's a lot of people that met here, um, including my wife and I met here. And then there's a lot of people who met here that have gotten married had kids and so almost feel like we are kind of grandpa-ish at this point. So, we provide onesies every once in a while, to the kiddos that come from the long nights at House of Rock.

**AK:**How did you come up with the logo of House of Rock?

**CL:**Well, that's a—that's a I don’t know if this is all appropriate for the podcast. Who is the audience? Who is listening?

**AK:**It's adults, it's all right.

**CL:**So, House of Rock used to be a—it was a gay bar before it was House of Rock, so we took it on and then we had House of Rock and it's a natural joke that kind of went with it. And so, we picked the rooster as our logo just rock out with your cock out as the short version of the story.

**AK:**It's my favorite story ever.

**CL:**Yeah, well. I don’t—I tell a few people this, but I'll say this here if you look at the chin, it's actually kind of phallic symbol and Fred Cook, Freddie Allen Cook who played for Hobo and has done my screen printing for years actually designed the logo for us. So, he should get the credit for the cleverness of the logo.

**AK:**When I was doing the practice—the intro interview with you. We were sitting in the front booth and there's the lunch Club sign and it's got a pizza slice on it. But when it goes through the sun, it looks like it's got balls (both laugh) intentional?

**CL:**I can neither confirm nor deny that was intentional.

**AK:**I figured it was intentional.

**CL:**Yeah, yeah.

**AK:**I'm going to do the same thing I did at the Surf Club. I didn't do it at Concrete Street because we know those are all big bands but I'm going to say a name of a band and you going to tell me what you remember. So, we'll start with Hank the Third.

**CL:**Hank the Three, I've done several shows with them. Actually, the first was at the Surf Club. Um, I like him, he is—comes in and he's looks like his grandpa and has a country side to him, that is this—this killer. And then he's got a rock side to him and I've seen he's got like a Doom metal show that he's done. He's done more of a punk psychobilly thing before. So, man like a musical genius. I think he's all over the place. I've done shows with him where he's been sober. I've done shows them where he's been not. But all my encounters with them have always been good. And the last time he played here they rehearsed on the small stage and he kept calling me sir, and it was saying please and thank you and it was a he was a very nice and polite guy. So, I was like, all right, I'll take it.

**AK:**Let's go with Drastic Actions.

**CL:**Drastic Actions, man, a historic Corpus Christi punk rock band. And not only are they just a good band, but I mean Arnulfo and that crew, um, was instrumental in booking a lot of punk rock shows and bringing other punk rock bands to Corpus. And so, there's a lot of—maybe some, um, credit needs to be given and throw in that way for just being able to keep that scene going as long as they have. And several different venues and always kind of making it work and bringing cool stuff down. And instrumental and a lot of the punk rock bands that have come through House of Rock. (loud bang)

**AK:**Um, Hayes Carll.

**CL:**Hayes Carll's cool. So, Hayes Carll's, I'm a personal fan of Hayes. But he played the Surf Club one year and there was Thurman Love was actually in charge and Thurman had been threatening to make us all shave our facial hair because we are starting to look scruffy, right. And so, I walked into work one day and I saw Johnny Joe had shaved then I saw another bartender, I think Ken Morton had shaved or one of those guys had shaved then I saw Thurman had shaved and I knew it was coming my way. So, I walk in and Thurman hands me a razor and some shaving cream and says "Man, shave up." So, we are all being punished for not keeping our facial hair groomed proper. So anyway, we shaved up. That week Hayes Carll showed up. He needed a shave and he was like, "Hey man, by a chance do you have a razor?" and says "Man, actually I've got a whole shaving kit," we just had to shave because we all got in trouble, so I give Hayes the stuff. Hayes shaves. Anyway, life goes on. Fast forward, I don't know if it was ten years or whenever it was that he came through and play at House of Rock, of course me being a fan I remember Hayes. I don't expect Hayes to remember me because there's a thousand guys like me running around in his life. So, he walked in the door and I introduced myself and I said, "You actually played for me before the Executive Surf Club," and he looked at me and went "I remember you, you gave me a razor. Yeah, I remember that." and he says everybody got in trouble for not shaving or something and I was blown away like wow, that's an interesting thing for someone to kind of keep in—of all the things made an impression, it was a razor and shaving cream. So anyway, great guy super cool, um laid-back, writes great songs, and I'm glad that he is doing well for himself.

**AK:**Mickey Avalon.

**CL:**Mickey Avalon, I didn't actually get to see that show. I was bummed out I didn’t get to see it because there's a lot of hype put into that. But Mickey Avalon came through with Dirt Nasty. Once again, if you actually go to the Myspace page for House of Rock and it still exists, I think it's Myspace/Texas House of Rock [https://myspace.com/texashouseofrock]. You can see pictures from the Mickey Avalon Dirt Nasty show.

**AK:**I took those pictures.

**CL:**They are still yeah. There you go. They are still up on there. There's still up on the Myspace.

**AK:**I stood up front with Jessica and got disgustingly sweaty for those pictures.

**CL:**Yeah, yeah, I know. Yes. I can see that happening.

**AK:**So, let's see. Who else can we talk about? Clutch.

**CL:**Clutch, once again, love those guys man. I wish I could have sold more tickets for him both times. They were here and brought them back more, but they've come through with Sounds the Underground that came through its Black Label Society at Concrete Street Pavilion, and they've been here twice, and they've always been super cool. Their tour manager Oscar was a good guy and those guys are fans of Mexican food. So, it's cool when they come to town and they want to know where they can get good tacos and then we provide them a place with good tacos, and this just makes their day.

**AK:**Where is the best tacos in Corpus now that the Donut Hole is gone?

**CL:**What that's just depends on what you are in the mood for. I think we sent Clutch one time to San Luis Deli and they had some cuisine over there they were looking for specific. Um, and then there's a taco truck off Kostoryz that is open late nights. It's like a Friday or Saturday night—it was Don Miguel—Tacos Don Miguel I believe—it's a little tire shop and they serve tacos about three a.m. So, if you are having a touring act that wants good Mexican food late night and you can kind of find them at that place.

**AK:**Billy Joe Shaver?

**CL:**Billy Joe Shaver, another good one. Now, he played here once and played at the Surf Club with me once. Phenomenal songwriter and, um, ladies' man. Billy Joe Shaver came through here and from my recollection doesn't drink, had a few Red Bulls, but he hung out with everybody until the place was empty and everybody was gone, and he says "Well, I guess I got to go now." So, he's still got it—he's killer.

**AK:**Um, Hobo?

**CL:**Hobo. Yeah, Corpus Christi band, made up of Freddie Allen Cook and Nathan McLain, and Gil Harris, and Andy—I forget Andy's last name suddenly, but—I think Gary Spitzer was in the band there for a while. We owned his soul by the way, it's still hanging in the front bar. But anyway, they had local—local band kind of a string band-ish type of thing. Something like I've never seen before, super fun. What we do the Hobo Hotdog Hootenanny for a while every Wednesday come in and get a chili dog or a hot dog and listen to Hobo. That was a popular night for a while.

**AK:**They recorded a live album here too.

**CL:**Yeah, they did.

**AK:**Has there been any others?

**CL:**We've done several recordings here. None that have gotten far enough and been produced into something. But yeah, there's several recordings from House of Rock and floating around.

**AK:**Um, what else—what other kind of events in here have been memorable for? You talked about burlesque and art shows but there's like the Seven Day Film Festival and things like that, so?

**CL:**Yeah, Seven Days is one of those things that was—I guess I'll hold that close to my heart because I was actually bartending a shift here, when we first open Heidi Hovda and Joe Hilliard were sitting at the bar and they are having a conversation about film. I wasn't necessarily in their conversation, don't know how it led to that point. But at some point they were talking about we need to do this film festival and they had this idea—where they would take seven days to, make a film and they had these rules and these ideas are kicking around and they said they needed a place and I was more than happy to give a place, I needed an event. So, they had an event had a place, it was a good partnership. Um, and I think that's been going on now for maybe twelve years or so. This might be the twelfth annual coming up eleventh, twelfth, and that's still going on and they have think every year they've had anywhere from maybe fifty to seventy-five teams. Each team I want to say it has five to ten people, I'm not sure the exact number but it's a pretty big amount of people. Local videographers, and editors, and writers, and actors, and actresses, and crew, and audio people, and they go out and hit a hard for seven days and make a film. And that events actually grown to a point to where the first year we had a mixer here for them, we did the kickoff here, and the turn-in which we've done the entire time, still to this day, and it's actually coming up soon in June—end of June, and then they would show the movies here. So, all the movies are about I want to say two to five minutes, short film. Um, and so they would show the movies here at House of Rock, well got to be so big within a year or two they could not show them here so they had to go show the moves a Harbor Playhouse and now they get shown every year at Alamo Drafthouse, so it's grown into a huge thing and I've been fortunate to be a part of that since beginning.

**AK:**When did you start CL presents?

**CL:**Oh, I want to say, that was a 2007-2008—really Ziegfest is when—that was the first big thing. I'd done some unofficial booking and promoting stuff on the side. But that was about ten years ago, CL Presents.

**AK:**What kind of events do you put on with that company?

**CL:**It really— t kind of tailored to the client. So, the biggest one that I'm involved in would be a Fiesta de la Flor and it's been going for five years. It's a tribute to the life and legacy of Selena Quintanilla Perez. And there's a—they have had thirty to fifty thousand people—thirty to fifty-nine thousand people, over two days, the past five years. And for that I pretty much it's—somewhat of a booking service. I helped kind of connect the dots and make sure the paperwork's in place and contracts things of that nature but then also line up the production, stage, sound, lights, video, walls, labor, and kind of concert logistics, backstage, catering, dressing rooms, runners, event staff, things that we need to make things happen for the stage, logistics, hotel rooms, ground transportation, air travel things that nature. So, pretty much I am in charge of putting together the concert portion of the event— the event itself has a team from the CBV [Convention and Visitors Bureau] and several volunteers and people to come in and make that happen. So, I'm just kind of responsible for what happens on the production side and back. That's why the biggest thing and then I do things from provide entertainment of somebody's got an event and they want a band they need stage, sound, and lights and just kind of make that event happen and kind of take it off their plate and make it to where they can worry about— marketing their event or not even marketing it but just creating their event and I can make sure that the band is there on time, soundcheck, sounds good, looks good, and all those type of things. And so sometimes those are just as easy as putting a band, and making a call, and getting a band to show up at a certain time and make them play. Sometimes there's more production involved and—done some corporate events and private events, and people's homes or for certain type of celebrations and then we also do provide like a booking service for Concrete Amphitheater and Brewster Street to where once again, if I've got a band it's bigger than maybe House Rock and hold I can present that option to the powers that be at those venues and have them purchase a show if they so choose or not.

**AK:**So, what festivals have you been a part of?

**CL:**The Día de los Muertos Festival, the Que Bueno Taco Festival is a first-year event last year. We started last year here at House of Rock Otrafest which is all Texas bands over four days actually, it was a fun deal. Those three—there's also the wine festival I do the production for—just pretty much stage, sound, and lights, type of a thing. Done the production for—this year for the first time the Pachanga that Vernon's had—the crawfish boil Pachanga, and there's a blues—was a blues on the bay and oh, no, that's not it, that was one we did at Concrete. There was one festival that we did, right when they took the Coliseum down, it was a one-year event that happened real quick. It was a beer and music festival.

**AK:**It was wine.

**CL:**It was beer one, we did a beer one.

**AK:**Todd Snider played.

**CL:**Yeah.

**AK:**And I drank wine.

**CL:** There was wine, but it was it was craft beer. Yeah, it was definitely craft beer.

**AK:**Okay, I just know that they kept handing me wine.

**CL:**Yeah. Yeah, that was good. (both laugh)

**AK:**And slices of pie.(laughs)

**CL:**Todd Snider is another good one who's been through Surf Club, House of Rock, and everywhere. He's great. So, yeah. So, anyway, it's really kind of, and going back to how have I grown in this industry, it's really—I don’t really own anything other than a contact list and knowing how to do the business with somebody. So, sometimes if somebody is—let's say getting married and you want to have a band play. There's a lot of stuff you have to worry about when you put a wedding together from the catering, to the invitations, to where is everybody going to stay, to—the list goes on and on and so somebody does not want to mess with the details of getting a band to be at a certain place at a certain time to play for certain amount. That's when they can kind of hire me and I can come in and kind of work the logistics for them.

**AK:**Or you could just get married at a hockey game and have it done for you.

**CL:**True story. I got married a backyard. It was perfect.

**AK:**Uh, yeah, Icerays game, woohoo! Uh, describe the kind of work you’d, kind of more in detail. It's mostly backstage. It's mostly not something that's glamorous people don’t understand that there's more to music than just like bands on a stage.

**CL:**Yeah, I can say one of the things I enjoy the most about my job is the satisfaction you get whenever you pull something off when it goes well, because like I said, there's nothing that that you do in my world that's rocket science or extremely difficult. I'm pretty good at multitasking. I think that's the number one thing and something I constantly still struggle to do better with is just my time management. But, if you just want to put like a generic example out there if you are going to book one band—well either you reach out to the agent or the agent reaches out to you, but that conversation happens is the date available, if so, you have to put an offer together. It is somewhat of a guessing game. There's no exact science but do a little bit of research and figure out how much should tickets be, how much do you think the band is worth, how many people you think are going to show up so you. So, you build a budget and it's going to cost you this much money to produce this show, therefore, I can afford to pay the band this much on an estimation of who I think's going to turn out to the show. And then you take that, and you turn that offer into the agent, that happens all the time. It is a very—not all of the time do they actually call you back or want to confirm the day but when they do then you start negotiating and then there's the merchandise percentage, and they have the little details of load in, and sound check, and ticket price, and they want to tweak this, they want more for catering, and sometimes they bring bands with, and if they bring bands with them that might open the door to need to communicate with that band, and their agent and, their management. So, let's just say you've got four bands on tour, which is pretty common in this world. You'll probably have four different contracts with four different agents. And then once you get all that negotiated, well, you have to build—put it on sale, you have to put it on the website, you've got to promote it, you've got to sometimes give the radio stations and negotiate those types of deals, and you get into the production side of things—of stage, sound, and lights, and what kind of power are they going to need on stage, how are they going to load in, how many people they need to help load them in. And all those kind of things get communicated and you call that like the advance, so you reach out to the band in advance and figure out all those details, and where they are going to eat, and they are going to stay, and it's all that type of stuff.  And then you end up, obviously your staff shows up. You got to schedule our people to be here at a certain time. And once again try to work on that within the budget you created and push tickets through the end and kind of constantly kind of whip with that horse and keep pushing and pushing until it's done and that show happens. And so, you've got months and months of work for about four hours of entertainment. So, it's amazing how much goes into it and it goes back to what I said earlier too, having just a good staff— of people who have been here a long time. We are kind of a fine-tuned machine now. There is a process that I'll do the negotiating and book the band's generally, turn that over to Stephanie. Stephanie takes it, she markets it, she promotes it, she handles the box office. Matt picks the ball up with it closer to it, talks about the details of the production, of the load in, and all that. And then we all kind of lean on each other whenever we need help, kind of making sure that everything's done. So, there's a lot that goes into it. A lot of times you get that far down the path and then show cancels, or van breaks down, or something happens. So, then you kind of have to undo all of that as well. So, at any given time we've got, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, we try to start touring bands and then Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday is local programming. So, a lot of the local programmer things we just kind of put on repeat. Every Wednesday we have Damon playing acoustic, every Tuesdays Open Mic, every Monday we've got trivia. So, those things kind of repeat themselves, but Thursday, Friday, Saturday you are looking at you could have all those conversations with all those people every week and that never ends. Because once you get through this week, we'll just got to deal with next week and we are always looking six to nine months down the road when we try to fill the date. So, it's a balancing act, trying to get everything done—I'm a little A.D.D., a little antsy—so, that was kind of helps me out in the situation.

**AK:**What is the most ridiculous thing you've seen on a band’s rider?

CL: I don't know—that so—that's a funny conversation because riders ask for a lot of stuff. And so sometimes people, staff or whoever sees a rider sometimes and "I can't  believe they want you to go out and get this specific kind of grape jelly" or this whatever and, I was like to remind my staff. "Hey, look these guys live in a bus, at the end of the day you go home, you pet your dog, you sleep in a comfortable bed, you have your fridge stocked with whatever kind of peanut butter and jelly you want. These guys live in a bus. They can't pull up to Walmart and go shopping." So, yeah, it's understandable to provide these things. Sometimes it's you get wacky stuff on there. But I feel like the things I've seen the craziest are mainly jokes. For example, Hank Williams III on his rider wanted a monkey, no explanation for the monkey and or what it was, it just said a monkey, and the most clever thing I've seen on is Valiant Thor's rider asked for a fan on stage and then had in parentheses not human. They didn’t want like a screaming fan of all their music. They wanted air circulation. So anyway, people have fun with those riders but generally speaking once again, we'll build a budget and say hey you've got this much money to spend and that's all relative to the size of the band and how many people are on tour. But you give them a number and say this is what we are going to spend and if they hit you back and want a certain kind of peanut butter—if it's in the budget, well, we go get it. And it’s kind—kind of go that route. But riders are made and kind of poked fun at but really you are living a bus, help these guys out, that's kind of the mentality we take on it.

**AK:**It also helps, if they like a certain kind of peanut butter to get the peanut butter.

**CL:**Yeah.

**AK:**I think for Hank III, me and Jessica went and got a stuffed animal. (both laugh)

**CL:**I remember, yeah for the monkey. It's good.

**AK:**All right. So, we are going to just go to general Corpus questions now, because Corpus Christi is a big important piece of the story, every place you've worked has been in Corpus so clearly that's something that's important. But a lot of people get asked this, I get asked this all the time. Why do you stay in Corpus Christi?

**CL:** I wanted to leave when I was younger and I think that was the common theme for anybody my age in that era, you grow up and when I get out. And I wanted to move to Austin. I was always a music fan and I love going to Austin and I used to go see shows there all the time. Like I said earlier, my situation changed when I became a young father, my family support was here. It was no way I could go and effectively raise a child, on my own in a different city. So, Corpus became my home. Um, looking back it was probably the best thing that happened to me. I feel like if we were to take House of Rock and plant it in Houston, Austin, Dallas, San Antonio, any other major market; we would be one of many. In Corpus we have the luxury of being the rock and roll bar here in town and 'THE' House of Rock and the place where we can do things like we do and there is not a lot of other people doing it at this point. At least not at this level and this size room and so even though there is other music venues in this town and there is other event space venues in this town, we are all able to kind of coexist, do things our own way. And so, at this point, I think it was it was awesome that I stayed and what keeps me here. I'm raising my son now. I'm on a kid number two. My daughter's graduated college. I got my son. My wife has got a good gig here in town and family is here. And I can't say that I'll be here the rest of my life, but currently I like the direction downtown is going. Things are really picking up. There's a lot of new construction. A lot of new buildings. A lot of what we used to refer to as opportunity is now coming to fruition and it's now happening. And so, things are being taken advantage of now, opportunities being taken advantage of versus just talked about. So, I think Corpus is moving in the right direction.

**AK:**All the years that I've toured with people and I went to different venues. I can say that there's not many places like House of Rock, most stick to one genre, most stick to one kind of clientele. The closest I could say would be like the Double-Wide in Dallas. It's a really great venue that also books country, rock, punk. I can't even see one in Houston. Maybe Emo's, they did some country but not much in Austin. It's all been very niche, and I think that in Corpus this this varied kind of existence that House of Rock has is kind of why it thrives.

**CL:**Yeah. Well, thanks and I would agree. I think that goes back to what I said earlier, you can't  have one genre in this town and have that fan base come out every night and support you. So, you have to kind of spread it around, you have to do different things. But yeah, when we opened up, you talked about earlier like, did we think we are going to be here in kind of a long-term, one thing I do remember talking about with Jesse Samudio, old manager and good friend of mine was, we wanted to be a place that grew little by little by little and had a massive foundation and could get by on very little so that we can kind of weather the storms, anything that comes our way and being like CBGB type place, to where they didn’t open up intending to be what they became, they became that way because that's the direction that the fan base took them and our clientele and the music that and that era. From a bar standpoint, business standpoint we always talked about there is places out there like Vernon's, and the Texan, and Lou's Saloon and these landmark places in Corpus that, aren't that place—like the new place that has all the fame and glory for year or two and then goes away. We wanted to build slowly and build that fan base and really tie into the community and become part of fabric, of downtown Corpus, so that's kind of.

**AK:**One of the things that most people say about Corpus Christi as we have no culture. So, can you show how Corpus has a culture and how it kind of embeds itself in House of Rock?

**CL:**Yeah Corpus has more going forward than I think some of the naysayers think, I mean if you want to remove even just music and entertainment and nightlife and restaurants as take that off the table for a minute and focus on just the birdiest city in the nation—in the country and is being a nature type city with all the fishing and all the water sports you can do. And water yoga now these days with Water Dog and all the cool stuff that they are doing. There's just a bunch of stuff you can do in this town. There is also—with the sporting, with hockey, with baseball, there is things to go do, there is museums galore and the beaches and so—Corpus has a lot of culture and if you take that off the table for a minute just go into the food. I mean, you can’t find a better taco. The—if you get north of San Antonio stop buying Mexican food, it's not the same. But that type of culture exists, and it is rampant down here. And music, I mean from the music side of things, the—with Selena, and Tejano, and Hacienda records, and a lot of the things that Q Productions has done over the years, and Freddy Records things at those guys have done to influence the music world is huge. You got Grammy winning bands that have come out of Corpus. Now if you are going to add in the live music and things like that, I think Corpus probably has more music venues per capita than a lot of cities do. Especially as towns are age—not our age but our size. But there's a lot of places, just the ones we listed and have been talking about from Boozers, American Bank Center, Concrete, House of Rock, and Surf Club. That's just a few, Rockits is doing music again, and they've got some music from time to time over a B.U.S. now. And there's a bunch of places of pop up, It'll Do Saloon, and you can see music, seven days a week and multiple venues and that's not even tap tapping into what they are doing in Port Aransas. And there's a lot of songwriter venues and cool stuff happening out there. So, Corpus has a ton of stuff going on if you are stuck in Corpus and can’t find something to do. It's your own fault for not looking too hard.

**AK:**Can you name some icons of the Corpus Christi music scene?

**CL:**Ray Summy just got inducted to the South Texas Walk of Fame and local guy played [with] Aloha Dave and the Tourists. He's hosted the longest-running open mic in Corpus Christi at the Surf Club on Wednesdays. Uh, plays in numerous bands around South Texas and one of the most positive guys you are ever going to come across and he's here right in Corpus and is always been here. You are talking about bands that have influenced things. Also, right now El Dusty is huge. At one-point Matt Hole and the Hot Rod Gang still a great band, but at one point they were touring outside of Texas and doing national tours and on HBO soundtracks things that nature. We mentioned Selena earlier and her influence on the community, but there's tons of folks that have come out of Corpus just like those will be mentioned. Shattered Sun is a heavy band, that is a rock band that now gets out tours. They are out of Corpus and they've done—signed with the record label and done national tours and whatnot. So, they are all over the place. Corpus struggles, once again, that is the geography, if you are touring band in Corpus, we are two hours from anywhere. So, to make a little weekend run somewhere is a little difficult, when—it is costly. So, we have our own battles, but for all that considered, Corpus has made a huge impact on the music scene throughout Texas and the nation.

**AK:**Some current local artists that you really love booking.

**CL:**I'm going to go back on Sweet Daddy. I know I sound like a bro—I'm a creature of habit. But those guys, man, they put on a great show and they are fun. There is uh—several several bands that we like to work with on a regular basis. There's a good reggae scene in Corpus, and the Flatbroke, and Bad Chords, and Crucial Rhythm, and bands of that nature. Um, Splendiferous is a killer local band, that sounds great and that do the cover tunes and can kind of fit any kind of crowd. I don’t know that I could say that I've got a favorite it's kind of like said earlier about my favorite music, there's always about three being in my top few they kind of rotate out.

**AK:**Do you think you've impacted the Corpus Christi music scene, and how so?

**CL:**I hope that I have. We all think—I try to—you get bogged down in the day to day, right? You don’t see the forest through the trees and it's hard to sometimes take a bird's eye look at the big picture. But I feel like we have with just open mic alone and I think it's pretty cool that we can come up on Tuesdays and Reverend Matt can set up the P.A. and host an open mic and bands can play on the same stage that Billy Joe Shaver is played on, that Steve Earle's play on, the Devil Drivers played on, and Hank Three has played on, and Slightly Stoopid has played on. I mean, it is kind of a cool thing I think to offer that, and I think we offer a safe place for kids to come hang out and get out of the house and do some stuff in a controlled environment. Hopefully, some musicians have come to shows here and seeing other musicians on stage and been inspired. I like to think that we've made our mark and are still doing so.

**AK:**Is being an all-ages venue important?

**CL:**I think so extremely and we struggle with it sometimes because there is certain shows to where—we do make that call and we become eighteen up just for the night, but I feel like going back when I was a kid and getting to go to EJ's, and Backdrafts, and Drop In Club, and certain places to see music, things got a little rowdy sometimes at shows but things never got really out of hand. Where, when I wasn’t doing those shows you kind of wonder the streets getting into trouble. I felt like—I got into trouble on the nights that I wasn’t doing something with my time that was constructive like music. So, I think it's important and I think you have a lot of time on your hands when you are in middle school, and high school, and in college to think and really enjoy music and the older you get the more you become focused on your kids, and diaper money, and what's for dinner tonight, and getting up early for your career, and your lifestyle just kind of changes a little bit so music I think's always had a young demographic and being all ages I think is extremely important for those reasons.

**AK:**What are your most important milestones?

**CL:**Oh man, um, my daughter just graduated college and she did it quickly and she stayed out of trouble and she's a good person, so I'm proud—proud of that—on a personal—I am proud of my family. I think I mean, I have got a five-year-old too at this point who is, uh, his own little dude, but I think personally those are probably um—that has been a huge milestone and when I became a young father man, it was scary, didn't know how it was going to turn out. So, knowing that has worked, I have a lot of faith in our five-year-old will make it, if the other one did. For a business standpoint, just being here, just open the doors. I mean, I really didn’t know that was going to be here this long. Being able to not only be here but still bring in what I believe to be good caliber of music, and serving great food, and being able to hold a staff of long-term employees is mind-blowing to me and I think that is a huge milestone.

**AK:**So, anything that you want to do that you have not done yet?

CL: It is fun to daydream, House of Rock is such a big place anytime that we feel like we are getting stale or stagnant, it is easy to swing a hammer in an area that just needs a little bit of love and add stuff to this building. So, I don't see myself going out and doing a lot of things outside of House of Rock as far as opening House Rock Southside or anything like that is really nothing, I'm excited about or think about. There still some nooks and crannies of this building that I think could be utilized a little bit better. So, until this place is busting at the seams seven days a week and we got our hands full here.

**AK:**Is there any way that you think Corpus has impacted on you to make you a different person?

**CL:**Yeah, for sure. Corpus has been great. It has been it is easy to get involved with the community here. If you start showing up to meetings, and asking questions, and volunteering your time, and get involved. So, if anything, Corpus has taught me the benefits of networking and being in— and the benefits of not working with your blinders on and just doing what you want to do on your corner of downtown but really embracing your neighbors and trying to be a part of that fabric of the community—is taught me that. And probably there is a lot of lessons that I am getting taught now that I don't even realize is happening until they get later on down the road. But yeah, Corpus is a—Corpus is home. This has been good; it’s been a good run here.

**AK:**Somebody just wandered into House of Rock, how would you describe it to them?

**CL:**Uh, that is funny because that happens all the time and it is—in some ways if your regular and you have been here, it's so easy, you walk in you order at the bar. But if you have never been here before, you walk in and you see concert posters on the outside, but you generally walk into the main bar area where there is no stage, and people wonder like "What are these concert posters in the windows for?" "Where do they play?" and then they see the small stage and assume that is where they play and teach them how to order so, there is an education process that we try to give everybody and starting off with "Hey, have you been here before? Oh no? Or are you here for food or drink, but what brings you to us?" and then you kind of get into your spiel of things and try not to overload them with everything but we give tours all the time of the venue and how this place operates.

**AK:**Are there any other stories about House Rock you would like to mention?

**CL:**Yeah, there is probably a ton of stories about this place. But yeah, I mean, I would not change anything. Going back and there was a time where didn't know how it was going to look next week, and getting through all that stuff and moving forward, would not change anything. There is a lot of—a lot of stuff. I mean really the biggest thing that I can hang my hat on, like I said earlier just a community involvement and the artists that have given their time and the people who have supported as it has been phenomenal, and I think that is—I don't know if I would have got that outside of Corpus, but it was cool. Even the—we talked earlier about how we change the walls from being all black to painting it like it is now, there is an artist Patrick Richards who is phenomenal, came in here and donated so much of his time, and energy, and vision to make this place what I'll call bulletproof, one day we might have to have a hardcore show the next day might be a kid's birthday party. How do you make that happen in an environment that is suitable for both? And he's—he did a good job of changing the walls and whatnot. So, and there's a lot of cool things that have happened in these walls.

**AK:**Is there any events coming up that you are excited to be working on?

**CL:**Yeah, yeah, definitely the the Fourteenth Year Anniversary party is coming through, there's a band David Beck's to Tejano Weekend is going to perform, I've become a fan of those guy. Mobley's coming back, he was at OtraFest put on a great show. Sweet Daddy is going to be on as always. We've got a Bloody Mary bar; we are going to kick the day off with so the anniversary party is going to be fun. Just book Strung Out with The Casualties, just announced that show tickets went on sale today. That's another one that's close to home, I'm a fan of Strung Out and The Casualties. Drastic Actions are opening up that show. Those are always fun. We've got this year is going to be our fifteenth annual zombie prom, which I think this is going to be the fifteenth and final year of zombie prom and we are going to make it a quinceanera since it's year number fifteen and go out with a bang. So yeah, there's always stuff we are working on. Starting to talk about the next Otrafest and when that's going to happen and trying to find a good time frame for that. So, there's always—there's always something, that's the beauty of being and doing what we are doing and having different genres and things there is always another angle, there is always something we can do.

**AK:**All right, now this is your chance to say whatever else you want.

**CL:**So much pressure.

**AK:**I know.

**CL:**Yeah, right on. I don’t know what else I can say; I mean you asked some good questions. I know I enjoy the conversation. I think House of Rock is—man, people make it, from the people that have been here from day one and contributed, to the people that work here and there's so many unsung heroes. We've got so many people on our staff, like Scotty Moore who comes in, been working here forever, I don't think the kid has got a single write-up in his file. He has been here for maybe ten years because he was on the street team before he was actually an employee and he is just a fan of music, a fan of what we do, and he is a student. And he comes in and does this thing, but we have got a handful of people that worked here for that long. It is just kind of cool and the buy-in from the community has been good. I don’t know what the future holds for us long term, but for the short term it is kind of—we are going to keep doing what we are doing: keep trying to book good shows and get good events in here and try to improve upon our systems to make the experience better for people to come through and keep Corpus on the map as a place bands need to be stopping when they are looking at Texas.

**AK:**All righty that is it, awesome.

**CL:**Right on.

**AK:**Thanks.

**CL:**Is that all right?

**AK:**Yeah.