

Speaker 1: Hello everybody. And welcome to Shuranagins. My name is Colin Shuran and I'm here to explore the lives of extraordinary people and topics on today's show. I am honored to present Jerry F. Fox. Jerry is a lifelong musician in which he has performed with many nationally recognized artists. And he is also a founding member of the 1980s country music band called [00:00:30] bandana. The band went on to be featured many times on Billboard's top 40, and they were also nominated for best vocal group of the year by the academy of country music. Jerry's also performed on the grand to OPRE, which I imagine was a huge honor, and we can get into that later. And in the present day, he has devoted himself to creating gospel music, which you can find on his most recent album titled gospel journey, man. So without further ado, Jerry, welcome to the show.

Speaker 2: Thank you, Colin. I'm glad to be here.

Speaker 1: Awesome. So I wanna start [00:01:00] way back when you first put up a guitar. When I was doing my research and everything, uh, I noticed, uh, a little backstory of how you got into music. So I wanted to know when did you know that you wanted to be a musician?

Speaker 2: Okay, well that to be a, I wanted, I wanted to play, I prayed from the time I was 13 or 14. I'll tell you a little story about, uh, my brothers. I started playing a six string guitar [00:01:30] when I was about 13. I had an uncle who knew a couple of chords. My dad knew a quarter or two and, um, they were, my family was in the radio business. And this was back when you still had live shows, you might have a 15 minute music show and a band would come in or even a single with a guitar. So I was exposed to that and I thought, well, gee, that's really neat. They can sing and play guitar. And so, uh, [00:02:00] and being in the radio business, I was exposed to a huge record library and had free reign. And, uh, so I would just, if the label looked interesting to me or the name of the artist, the title of the song, uh, I could, uh, take it back.

Speaker 2: And there was another studio that was like an audition studio where they would audition the new records that came in. I could go back there and, and, uh, and just, uh, it [00:02:30] was like traveling around the world, you know, hearing all this music, but, um, we would, uh, my mom played cello now. She gave it up cuz she had three boys and uh, I was, the oldest had two younger brothers. They were a year apart and I was about three, three or four years older than the, than my next brother. So you can imagine she had her hands full. So she had, she had to give up, uh, [00:03:00] the cello dad played the accordion, um, and sang in a gospel quartet. Uh, his side of the family were musical. He had, uh, two brothers who sang. One of 'em was a great piano. He played professionally with a, uh, gospel quartets and uh, a sister who also played piano and could sing.

Speaker 2: So they had a family quartet. And uh, this of course this was before I was born. [00:03:30] Uh, and on my mom's side, uh, her mother played piano and Oregon played organ in church, uh, time. And, uh, that's how she came to play cello. So it was just, I guess it, it was in the jeans and uh, but I can recall, uh, we had, we lived in a little three bedroom ranch style house. It's probably built in the early fifties, uh, when we, uh, moved from Texas, [00:04:00] Oklahoma. And it was one of those that had a living room, combination, dining area and the living room was carpeted and the carpet stopped and it was Oleum in the dining area. Well, after dinner, mom and dad still be sitting at the

table and dad's reading or something. And so my brothers and I would do a show for them and, uh, they had UK ukuleles, little plastic ones.

Speaker 2: And [00:04:30] um, and in fact, uh, I can't believe she let us do this, but she let us get her cello out of the closet. And that court became a base because we were small and the cellos are small, you know, quite a bit smaller than a string base. So anyway, we would we'd entertain and we were actually making up songs and, uh, I must have been 12, 13, 14. And then, uh, [00:05:00] by the time I was, I got my first electric guitar and I started, uh, really practicing a lot. Um, there were guitar bands like the, the ventures, um, oh, uh, Dwayne, Eddie was big and these were instrumental hits. Uh, you don't hear many instrumental hits anymore. And I try to figure out what they were doing and just taught myself basically. [00:05:30] And, um, of course that, um, my parents always dad said, well, that's fine.

Speaker 2: If you want to play music by the time I was 16, I had my own little rock and roll band. It was other kids, my age, we played, um, oh, American legions. We played the, the Catholic, uh, uh, what'd. They call them, uh, the CYO, the youth group or whatever they were, they were called. [00:06:00] They would have dances in the basement at their church. And, uh, we we'd play in school and things like that. Uh, and we were all self-taught, we'd just figure it out. You know, had a, a, a friend of mine who was a drummer who could really sing. And, um, and my father always said, look, if you wanna play music, that's great, but you need to prepare for something other than that, you know, you need to go ahead and get, get an [00:06:30] education, find a feel you think you like.

Speaker 2: And so I, um, uh, I finish college, played music all the time. I was in college and was actually, uh, probably making a lot more money than I would have working somewhere else. But, um, that's, that was kind of the beginning of it. And, um, I, uh, you know, I, I went [00:07:00] into, I joined the national guard, uh, when I was at finished my junior year in high school. And I, I dunno if they'll do this now, but they would let you enlist at the end of your junior year. And then you would spend that summer at a summer camp at a, at an army base. And then, uh, you would go, uh, the, the drills were once a month for the weekends. And so when you finished your high, your senior year, so when you graduate, that's when you [00:07:30] went to active duty for six months, at the way it was set up at the time.

Speaker 2: So you spent, um, actually it was the end of the summer. I think I left for Fort Leonard wood, Missouri. So there was, uh, six months there that I was, uh, active duty military. And at the, uh, the post at, uh, Fort Leonard wood, uh, they had a serviceman's club where you could go check out musical instrument and they had a music [00:08:00] room and I met other players there. I, uh, I met, uh, a guitar player from California who could really play, in fact, he had played with buck Owens. So he said, and so we played together, uh, and just there on the post. And when we could get off the aged, like on the weekends or something, we go here bands and things like that. And, uh, I went to St. Louis with him, uh, ended up, [00:08:30] uh, I think he wanted to go to the bur Les shows.

Speaker 2: That was what we went to St. Louis and I, and here I am, I'm 18, 19 years old. And I just said, well, I don't know about that. You know, said, you go ahead, you go ahead and tell me about it. I did go to one with him and it was all military guys, all uniforms. And, uh, who was on that pig meet mark. Now, your grandmother will remember, know who that

is. I can't say, I dunno who [00:09:00] he is black. Well, his punchline was here. Come to judge here, come to judge. He was, he was, uh, the, the comic on that show. And, uh, the star was, uh, a woman called temp storms. It was really, and they had a little pit band. It was like two or three old guys, guy playing drums, guy playing piano. And I think a trumpet. And so it was a throwback to, gosh, the twenties, thirties, and forties.

Speaker 2: And, uh, that, that whole, [00:09:30] a CD part of St. Louis, I'm sure that's all been plowed under by now that whole neighborhood. But, uh, I, I digress here that didn't have a whole lot to do with music, but the friend, the guy befriended, he was really helpful. And whenever the, the outfit, I, I was trained to be, uh, a lineman, uh, cuz they, you, when you know, they were out in the field, if you're out in a combat [00:10:00] situation, uh, you can't always use radios cause they'd be intercepted. So if you just wanted to have right behind the front line communication, you'd just run wires and everybody would have kind, kinda like a walkie talk and then they a and nobody could intercept those signals and, and there would be a big spool and you'd run through the woods and, you know, threading out that wire and hook it up to these radios.

Speaker 2: And um, so, and I learned to climb poles, [00:10:30] which, uh, was, uh, not my cup of tea, but, uh, it was necessary cuz you had some time go up on a pole to stream wire and, and it was a combat engineer outfit that, uh, we were trained with. And I think the last, uh, two or three months, uh, they were going to go out in the field and just stay out there for like three or four months and ju just live off the land out there is try to duplicate, [00:11:00] uh, that, uh, that kind of a situation for, for preparing for uh, Vietnam or wherever. And um, but the, uh, superior officer said, well, you're a national guard guy. You're getting out in three months, aren't you? And uh, said, yes sir. He said, well, we don't need you out there in the field. There won't be much, you know, they didn't want to put any more time in training at me cause they [00:11:30] knew I was about to get out.

Speaker 2: He said, so we're gonna make you permanent barracks orderly, which meant I stayed behind and they, uh, they were gone, but uh, I think they came in at night. Uh, they did come in at night, but my job was to clean the barracks, clean the latrines and just sit there all day basically. Uh, and I had bought a nice offender, Strat caster guitar while I was, uh, there [00:12:00] at that base. And um, I think it was Rola Missouri and the music stores where I bought it. So I had nothing to do, but practice cuz I four or five hours, I, I, I practiced so much that my, the joints in my left hand got to hurting so bad. I went to the, uh, to the doctors, the army doctors there and they did x-rays and everything says, well, it just, it looks like you have just exercised it too much.

Speaker 2: You know, [00:12:30] they couldn't really find anything wrong. Uh, um, but, uh, that's where I made a major leap, uh, you know, in my ability to play. And um, so, uh, when I got out and I went back, uh, to Oklahoma and I enrolled in college there, well, I got a job with a band. I was the lead guitar player. And as I all out of that experience at, uh, in the military and um, [00:13:00] I went to a, uh, a state college in Western, Oklahoma. That's that's where I grew up, uh, out in Western Oklahoma. And, um, there was a band there, there were two or three bands on campus and, uh, there was one band didn't didn't, um, didn't have a bass player and I, I had picked up a bass to no, no, I hadn't, I hadn't, they didn't own a bass yet, but I noticed they didn't, they had, uh, a league, [00:13:30] two guitar players.

Speaker 2: One of 'em just played rhythm and saying the other was the league guitar players, a drummer and a piano player. And I saw them at one of the school dances. So, uh, I went up to them and I said, um, y'all need a bass player. And they said, oh, do you play? And I said, well, yeah. And, uh, and I didn't own a bass. I'd never play, picked it up. And uh, they said, well, um, we rehearse once a week on campus [00:14:00] at a, they had a music department, they had these rehearsal rooms that you could, any, any of the students could, could, uh, reserve one of those rooms. That's where they rehearsed. And uh, they said, we're gonna rehearse next, uh, week we here night, I guess it was. And, um, so I needed to find a base so I could do the audition.

Speaker 2: And, uh, I rode the train from Weatherford, Oklahoma to Oklahoma city. And [00:14:30] a friend went with me and my, probably my roommate and, uh, bought a base and a pawn shop at think I paid \$75 for, as a Japanese base. And, uh, so I went to the audition and they said, oh, that's great. Said, yeah, you're in. And, and they were playing at a nightclub off campus and they had kind of a steady job there on the weekends. Uh, so I started playing bass and, um, this bass was [00:15:00] awful. The ne had a real long neck and it was already bold when I bought it, but the strings got an inch off of the fretboard, but it turned out, uh, that I picked up the guitar at one of the rehearsals and started playing. And the, the league guitar player says, man said, you play league guitar player, league guitar a lot better than I do.

Speaker 2: Why don't you play league guitar and I'll switch the bass. And, um, cuz it, you know, it, [00:15:30] the, the first four strings, uh, I call 'em the bottom strings. The, the, the bigger strings are tuned in Octa lower than a, the four strings on a six string guitar. So if you can find your way around on a six string guitar, you can find it on those four strings on the base. Everything's just an Octa lower. So, uh, we, we swapped places and I had that nice strata Castro guitar that I'd bought when I was in the, at Fort [00:16:00] Leonard wood. And it was a rockabilly band, uh, and gosh, Elvis and all of that, you know, we were doing the Beatles that had just hit, had just started, uh, invading. And, um, anyway, it, it was good money, lots of attention. We played school dances and, and that sort of thing, but the music was just [00:16:30] a kind of one dimensional.

Speaker 2: Like it wa wasn't really satisfying, uh, for me. And, uh, in the meantime, I don't know how this guy found out about me, but, uh, he was in the air force at a, at a base about, uh, 30 minutes or so from the campus. And, uh, he was, um, a drummer and he was from Virginia, Portsmouth, Virginia, a black guy. [00:17:00] And he called me one day and he said, Hey, he said, uh, we heard you can play bass and play guitar said, uh, we have a little jam session here at the air base said, like to invite you to come. So I went, I, they were playing jazz way over my head. And I, I took my bass by this time I had bought a, a nice fender bass. And, uh, so, um, I, I could play some of the stuff they were playing, but then they would start improvising [00:17:30] and you get over my head pretty quick, but, um, he could sing, he was a great singer, had a great drummer too.

Speaker 2: And, uh, we, uh, he was going taking night classes at the same college I was going to, and, uh, turned out he had met some other musicians there on campus and a key, a keyboard player who had a, a Hammond organ and also played trumpet. And they recruited [00:18:00] me on guitar and the bass player from the rockabilly band and this drummer to, to start a band, I call the mark four. And, um, it was, uh, started out to just be rhythm and blues and, you know, James Brown, Ray, Charles, the stuff that was popular at the time, Wilson picket and, uh, cuz that's what the kids were dancing to. Um,

[00:18:30] it turned out to be a really good band and, but we, we could do lot. We did rolling stones. We did the Beatles, we did whatever was popular, Tom Jones. And, uh, we, um, went to Oklahoma city, which is about an hour and a half drive from where we were going to school in a auditioned at a nightclub there, uh, called the ons club.

Speaker 2: It was the nicest club in Oklahoma city and got the job. And I think we started out playing [00:19:00] four nights a week. It turned into five nights and, uh, we were commuting cause we all had classes. I had eight o'clock classes when we played a one o'clock in the more morning and we had the hour and a half drive, but this band became really popular in Oklahoma city. Uh, the place was packed every night and um, and we made really good money and the guy that owned the club, he, he loved us. And when we would get a school [00:19:30] job or a dance or something and we want to book out, he said, well, what are they paying you? And he said, well, it's pretty good money. He said, it's a one nighter. And he said, I'll double it. So you don't just tell him you're not available.

Speaker 2: He didn't want us to leave. He didn't want us to go anywhere. And we played there for about, uh, two years, two and a half years. Uh, it was, I remember my first eight o'clock class was [00:20:00] a geography class. I, I had, I said, I gotta have a gut class at early in the morning, cause I'm going in there and I'm dragging, you know, got home at three in the morning. And uh, I remember the a, uh, instructor. She caught me dozing and she just came over and kind of just nudged me. She said, Mr. Fox said, you're gonna have to make a decision. Do you wanna study geography? Or you just want to keep playing music. And, but uh, anyway, I got through it and uh, [00:20:30] we now, you know, we're all single, we're like what, uh, 18 years old, you know? And some of these girls that we had met in Oklahoma city they'd come all the way out there to see us.

Speaker 2: And, uh, uh, and they had a strict rule. There was this very conservative school. You couldn't have women in your dorm room. You couldn't have 'em in your apartment if you lived off campus. And they said, well, if, if it's [00:21:00] a, a woman, you know, it's come to visit you. She can stay in the, the women's dorm. You know, we pair up with somebody there. Uh, so, uh, I think, uh, the, the guitar player and I, we got caught and we had to go to the, uh, Dean's office and, uh, which, uh, I, it, it wasn't a good experience. I mean, he lectured us and all that. And he said, now, if y'all want to go [00:21:30] to school here, you're gonna have to play by the rules and all that. So we said, yes, sir. Yes, sir. Won't happen again. We're sorry. Da, da DAA. Anyway, we survived that. Uh,

Speaker 1: So that's what it was like to be a true rock star. Y'all had the, the, the first feelings of being a true rock.

Speaker 2: That was, uh, yeah, I remember we played an, a dance at the armory and I think some friends of ours promoted it. They were also students. They, they actually rented the [00:22:00] armory advertised. It hired us promoted the, the show. And it was in the stage was right in the middle of the big, the big room in the armory. And, uh, you could not stir 'em with a stick. That place was jammed. So the promoters made out fine, but they were all students, you know, uh, and it was so everybody knew who we were and all of that. And that was sweet. I mean, you know, I didn't find that at all. Um, [00:22:30] and I remember watching the Beatles on ed Sullivan during that period and, uh, with my, a couple of guys in the band and, and it just, I mean, just blew our heads off.

Speaker 2: He said, wow, you know, what is it? It was so new so fresh because you still had, you know, in pop music, you still had Doris Day and Rosemary Clooney. You still had the old school [00:23:00] from, you know, from the fifties, uh, and the Beatles in, they killed a lot of people's career, a lot of, uh, uh, singers that came out of Hollywood and in New York that, uh, were doing pop music. It just, it, it was a whole new thing. Cause you know, once the Beatles hit, then you just had the, the flood gates open. Then you had all of these acts coming out of, uh, uh, England, [00:23:30] uh, and the Rolling Stones, uh, gosh, some great bands. And, uh, it was just a whole different thing. I mean, they were, it, it, it was zeroed right in on the kids, you know, where their parents were still listening to some of the old school singers and stuff.

Speaker 2: We were popular enough. We opened for Simon and Garfunkle the loving, spoonful, uh, some of the big names at that time, [00:24:00] the Simon and Garfunkle gig was kind of strange because it in a theater in the round, uh, out in Framingham. And, uh, and at that time, Simon and Garfunkle were just, they were still doing a duo. They'd already had some hits, uh, sounds of silence. And they'd already had two or three hits, but, uh, they still doing their show, just the two of 'em with Paul Simon playing guitar. [00:24:30] And so, uh, I don't know how we got on that bill. Our manager got us on it, but so we show up there for a sound check and we're we got long hair and we we're hippied out. And, uh, Paul Simon a, uh, asked the promoter said, uh, are these guys the opening act? And, uh, said, yeah, said, uh, yeah, they're, uh, they're pretty popular out here, said, well, could we hear them?

Speaker 2: [00:25:00] He said, yeah, they're setting up. We're gonna set 'em up. We're gonna do a sound check. We'll have, 'em do a couple songs and you can check out our manager. He came and said, oh, he said, uh, when you guys get up to your sound check, Paul Simon wants to hear, hear who you do something. He said, man, pick the tamest thing. You got pick the tamest thing you got. So we, uh, and we had a ballot or something like that. So we played that. And, uh, Paul Simon, oh, they're fine. They're okay. So we, we, we got [00:25:30] past that, but when we did our set, we did what we normally do and trash the stage and all of that. And the people loved it. They loved it. They loved Simon Garfunkle, but they, it was, it was a young crowd cause they were appealing to college kids.

Speaker 2: And um, so anyway, that was an interesting show. We did another, uh, a Beatle, uh, the beetle had two, they had hard days, night [00:26:00] and help. They had their two, their two movies, the first, first two movies out. And, uh, there was a theater there in ball Austin that, that had, uh, uh, a Beatle festival. So they showed those two movies back to back all day and into the night, I guess, up to one or two in the morning. And then, uh, they hired us to play a short set between the, the, the films. I think we played 20 minutes, [00:26:30] maybe four songs probably. And of course it was all kids, you know, as the Beatles were so hot at that time. Well, we, we didn't, uh, we just hung, we watched the movies a couple of times, so, but then we just hang around backstage and out in the alley. And, uh, the, the lead singer, he brought a, a case of wine. So we were back there drinking wine. And by the, I [00:27:00] don't know, after six or seven hours, we're just looped. And I don't know how we got out on stage or we got out. We, they had to push us out on stage. We got through the gig, all right, and got paid and everything, but it was, it was awful. The music had to be awful. I wasn't conscious enough to be able to tell. Um, but anyway,

Speaker 1: Now when did bandana come along?

Speaker 2: Uh, that was after I moved to Nashville. Uh, [00:27:30] I had, uh, married a girl I met in, in college. We were born on the same day. She lived in, uh, the same year and she lived, uh, an apartment next door with women. And then I was living in partner with about three or four other guys. And, um, so we both graduated the same time. Uh, we moved up to New Hampshire. Well, first I played down on Cape Cod. I, I, my senior year, [00:28:00] I got a job. Uh, the, the rock and roll band ended breaking up. They wanted to go to New York. I said, man, I'm not going. And I, I, I don't think they lasted much longer after that. So I got a job playing with a comedian, uh, playing bass with a, uh, uh, who was a singer played guitar. He could sing sorta.

Speaker 2: And, but his, his ma he, his, his name was Dick Doty, D O R [00:28:30] E T Y. And his, his tagline was dirty. Dick Doherty. He's one of the first insult guys that, uh, he played the Kopa cabana. He, he kind of became a big deal after a while, but he, uh, he, he, he would use profanity on stage. He'd put people down, take, make racist jokes and all of this and had had a big following. And we played, uh, downtown Boston and, uh, [00:29:00] you know, the mob controlled a lot of those nightclubs and things down downtown. And, uh, and I, I think they, this was in the basement of a hotel. It was a big club. They would have these R and B bands play dance music, and then Dick would do his success. He would, he, his jokes were like, he would pick on the ethnic groups, the Italians, he was Irish, but he would pick on them, the blacks, he, and he [00:29:30] would drink.

Speaker 2: He would drink he's Irish. He would get drunk. And, and the drunker, he got the crazier he got, and one night he went too far with the Italian jokes because, because the place was run by Italians. And he left the club that night. Uh, and they, some big guys were waiting for him when he got out to his car, out in the alley and they put him in the hospital and he, we didn't work for about a month. I mean, he, he was in the hospital for [00:30:00] like a week or two. And when he came back, you know, he, he would just all cut. His face, was all cut up and everything. It took a long time for him to heal to where he looked, anything like he did before his, his nose was broken. Wow.

Speaker 1: That just goes to show you don't mess with Italians. That's

Speaker 2: Right. You don't, I, I don't know how I got off on that tangent, but, um, that was the Boston experience. Then I moved to Nashville and [00:30:30] I'm on my own. I'm single. And, uh, I had met, I was playing in a country band. There was a country band out of Boston that was real popular. Cuz there weren't that many country bands, the guy that owned the band also was a booking agent. And uh, so I went to work in his office and I was booking bands too. I was working as an agent, uh, and his band would get the job opening for all these national acts that would come through. [00:31:00] Or if it was say a guy that was pat his, his peak years were over, but he still could sell tickets. Well then we would be his backup bag guys. Like Furlan Husky, people like that, that had real popular back in the fifties and sixties, they could still play a, a fair up in Maine someplace.

Speaker 2: And so John would, uh, he would get the act for the promoter. And then we would be that, that person's backup band. On Monday nights, they had a jam session. Cause [00:31:30] that's when all the road musicians would get back in town by Sunday, they'd usually leave on Thursday or Friday, go out and play three or four towns and shows different places. And then on Monday night, all the road musicians would come in there and with jam. And that's where you met people. Well, he, he said, yeah, come on down to demons today when you get in town, come down on Monday. And so I did and I sat in

and met some of the guys and then he called me, I think the next day he said, [00:32:00] oh, there's a new act on a epic records. That's looking for a bass player. It's a girl singer.

Speaker 2: And uh, they're auditioning bass players this Thursday. And it was down, uh, on Broadway, lower bra. There's still, they had clubs down there and uh, and the house band was going to let bass players sit in with them. And, and her name was Charlie McLean. She ended up having several number [00:32:30] ones, top tens, uh, did duets with Mickey Gilley when he was hot, the urban cowboy thing and all that was happening. And it was the strangest audition because it was Charlie, her manager, a guy named Johnny Duncan who was also had some hits. I think he was on Columbia. He may have been on epic, uh, and that he was friends with Charlie. So he was there and her band leader, who was her drummer. So they're sitting out there [00:33:00] and they, uh, they had three, maybe could have been four bass players. And they said, uh, yeah, I just go up and sit in with a band play two or three songs.

Speaker 2: Just let us hear what you do. And, uh, I did. And they, after I came off and said, well, you got the job if you want it. And I said, oh, okay, uh, we're going to start rehearsing. Uh, next week at, uh, S I rehearsal studios cause uh, epic [00:33:30] records had hired this choreographer from Hollywood to come in and work with her and work with the band for put her show together. And we rehearsed all week. The next week we were on the road. We did this tour that the record company had set up. It was like a meet and greet tour where you go play all these popular places all out west. And we went up into Minnesota, Wisconsin had our trailer stolen in Missouri, um, lost of our equipment. And all I [00:34:00] ever heard was, man, you you're going to end up delivering pizzas. You're going to do, you know, you gonna be some kind of day job or something to get by. And you know, what it amounted to as being at the right place at the right time, having what the people wanted, what she wanted. She needed her band leader. Rec's a drum. He recognized, you know, this guy can play. I got fired from Charlie McLean.

Speaker 2: Uh, [00:34:30] it was, we were on the road. I'm single. So I'm acting like a single musician. And uh, in the meanwhile Charlie had taken up with her guitar player. I don't know if I should be saying this. I won't mention any names, but, um, but I guess it can be looked up. He he's, he's dead now. Rest is soul. [00:35:00] But, um, and for some reason he decided he didn't like me. And uh, so he convinced Charlie that, Hey, we need to get somebody else. We don't need Jerry. And I don't know, as, maybe as I was carousing a little bit too much, you know? And, uh, cause I, I end up with a woman at some at her house and they're wanting to, to leave, you know? And [00:35:30] so they're looking for me and, and my parents can't hear this. They're both in heaven, so I guess they can hear it, but they're, they're, they'll forgive me.

Speaker 2: So I ended up playing down in printers alley in, uh, uh, working for another comedian down there. In fact who played guitar, he was a good singer, good guitar player. Uh, and I can't remember it was the embers. I think the embers club, [00:36:00] it was a nice play. This is, I don't know what printer's alley is now. It kind of went downhill, but it was the night spot in Nashville, you know, back in the eighties, seventies, eighties, I guess, even in the nineties. So playing for this guy, I'm at, uh, the drummer who would become the lead singer, uh, for bandana and the keyboard player. They were, the keyboard players were played for this comedian, uh, [00:36:30] Joe Vandyke. That's where I met him. And then, uh, the drummer, he had been playing with Brenda Lee and I don't know what

happened. He took this job and the, the comedian was always on him, just on him, just making fun of him and, and, you know, riding him all the time.

Speaker 2: And he finally said, man, I can't take this anymore. He quit. And, uh, that's uh, Le Wilson, uh, took the drum chair and I don't remember [00:37:00] how he found out about it, cuz I didn't know Lonnie until he came into the band. So, uh, that was the nucleus of bandana. Although we, we didn't even have plans to play on our own. We were gonna work with this guy cause he paid well, then he, uh, told us, well, I'm going to go out with, on a tour. And I said, you guys want to go with me? And he told us what we would make. And he, uh, was going out to Phoenix or Tucson, Tucson, Arizona. There [00:37:30] was a big, uh, hotel out there that, uh, he had played before. He was real popular in that area. So we went in two cars, pulled in a trailer, had his brother, was his worked the, the spotlight sound or whatever.

Speaker 2: And he had a girl singer. And uh, so she, uh, I think they were dating at the time. So we went out to Tucson with played that [00:38:00] hotel for something like, uh, two, three weeks. We did play a date in Phoenix. And then he said, now I've got a date in Houston. We're gonna play there for two weeks. So we went from there to Houston and while we're in Houston, he says, uh, well I said, I wanna go to Vegas. I said, you guys gonna, are you on board? You want to go? And so the piano player and the drummer and I, and, and he had this musician from Tucson who joined us out there, guitar [00:38:30] player, good guitar player who also played trumpet. So that was the band. And so we got to talk and said, man, we all came to Nashville to, to, you know, get in the studios and write songs.

Speaker 2: And here we are, we're out here on the road and he wants to take us to Vegas and we're just gonna be side man out here, just, you know, living on the road and that's not what we all wanted to do. So we decided, well, let's, [00:39:00] let's give him our notice. Let's go back to Nashville and, and do what we want to do. So we had, and he had us wearing these gun fo gun fighter outfits, the, the long black coach and the, the boots, big black boots came up to your knees. They were really cool though. The black scarf, these black hats and stuff. Uh, and it, you know, we, we said, let's have a picture made where in those outfits, we don't even, [00:39:30] we're not gonna tell Roy what we're doing. And so, and we asked guitar players say, well, you stand in this picture with us, get your, get your U your uniform.

Speaker 2: So we had our picture made out behind the hotel and we asked the guitar player says, you want to go with us? So we're gonna go back and just to make a living, we're going to try to book us as a band and, uh, to, uh, in order to, uh, you get by and, uh, cuz we're not going to, you're not gonna pull up [00:40:00] and get studio work. It just doesn't work that way. So, uh, he said, uh, and he thought about it. I don't think so said, Roy's been good to me. He pays, well, he said, I'm gonna stay with him. And then we leave, we go back to Nash and uh, the girl singer, she wanted to leave too. She had had enough of Roy, the, the, the, the comedian guy and she had [00:40:30] started dating, um, Dolly Parton's guitar player and, uh, who he played with Eddie rabbit, uh, before that.

Speaker 2: And then he played, he was playing with Dolly Parton, a really nice guy. They ended up getting married, the girl singer. She said, can I go with, you guys said, I'm want to get outta here. So the, the three of us and, and, uh, Peggy, we go back Nashville. And um, [00:41:00] we said, well, and, and, and Peggy, we were backing her she's part of the

show. And, uh, we said, Peggy, you wanna stay with us? We're gonna get us a job somewhere. And whatever we can find, you know, at, uh, operating land or someplace. And, uh, she said, yeah. So we, we wanted to make more money and play some bigger places. And the U the UA tower down on music row was that tall, tallest building down on music row. There's a booking agent [00:41:30] that had the penthouse up there. He lived there, his offices were there. And, um, his name of his company was let entertain you. His logo was the head of lettuce. This guy was real eccentric.

Speaker 3: Yeah. Sounds like him.

Speaker 2: So we show up, we walk in and we say, well, can we see, uh, the agent? So we're here. We got a, a demo tape. We got APIC. We went out and had an, a picture made at a, [00:42:00] a PLA a Harding road, 35 bucks. It was awful. But we just, and we got a friend of Lonnie's to stand in in the picture. So there'd be four of us, but it was the piano player, Lonnie and I, and, uh, and the friend Lon who happened to be a, a, a drummer. They were both from Louisiana. They growing up in the same Monroe, west Monroe area, the, uh, agent, he comes out and he, he, he shakes your hand. [00:42:30] So come on back. He said, let me hear, see what you got. We go back and to his penthouse and his one big space, about three times the size of, of this room we're in, but you had the kitchen over there.

Speaker 2: He had this king size bigger than king size bed had these glass walls that looked out over Nashville and everything. And so he took our cassette, put it on, laid down on the floor and he's got his eyes closed and he's listening to the music. And, [00:43:00] and I don't know what he thought of our picture. It was awful. So after the end of it, he gets up and he says, why'd you bring me this? He said, I can't, I can't book. These are original songs. These are demos said, I, the bands, I book play, cover music. They play the hits. What am I supposed to do with this? And it kind of dressed us down and said, well, that's all we've got, you know, but the agent says, wait a minute. I [00:43:30] said, you guys wait out, wait out in the front, uh, lobby there.

Speaker 2: And, uh, let me, me, let me have your cassette. I'll be back. And he goes across the hall and there is a record producer. That's on the same floor with him across the hall. And he's got a receptionist and he's got a big office suite and all that stuff. And he had had ran IBC records that had, it was a, an independent label. Some backers out of Texas, they'd had some hits, uh, [00:44:00] Jeanie, Pruitt, sat and sheets to I, that was on IBC records. He had ran that label and everything. And he also was managing Sawyer brown. That became kind of a contemporary of bandana. And Alabama, Alabama was on RCA. They were selling a lot of records and selling out, uh, shows. All of the labels were starting to look for those kinds of acts. That was the Beatles influence on country music. There were [00:44:30] bands that could sing.

Speaker 2: So the agent comes back and he said, well, here's your cassette? He said, uh, Stan wants to see you. Y'all go across the hall. Stan Cornelius is his name. So we went in there and we go in his office and, uh, he said, uh, did you guys write these songs? And Lon, I said, yeah. He said, uh, well, where'd you do that? You know, who's playing on that. I said, well, that's us, we're playing on it. He said, it is his eyes just lit up. [00:45:00] Like, you see the cash register running. He said, uh, well, if y'all signed with anybody, he said, no, he said, we're just trying survive. We're trying to work. Uh, and uh, he said, well said, I

think I might be able to help. You said, we're gonna have to do, uh, you, you got any more songs said, well, yeah, we're writing all the time.

Speaker 2: He said, well, you keep bringing me some songs. And, and, uh, let [00:45:30] me come up with something, see if I can help y'all. And, uh, he said, I, uh, if, if, if you'll go in the studio with me and we'll do some of these songs that you've, you got on your demo tape and try to get a more polished, uh, version of them. And, uh, and then let me, uh, see what I can do with it, cuz he knew everybody in town. So we did, he booked us out in Hendersonville or a place called doc studio. That's where we [00:46:00] cut our first records. And uh, then he pitched us to all of the major labels and Warner brothers bit. Wow. And liked it. Yeah. And uh, uh, he, and he told me, said, well, I've been to capital. They passed on it. Uh, I went to RCA, they've already got Alabama. They don't need you. Every major label was looking for a band like that. They could sing a young band.

Speaker 1: I was wondering actually about bandana getting nominated for best vocal [00:46:30] group. What, what led y'all to that?

Speaker 2: Uh, that is, uh, people, CMA, ACM academy, country, music, country, music association. There may be some others out there. A, a group of people can, uh, there's like two or three rounds of nominations. And we had, uh, a fan club, uh, based out of Boise, Idaho that was really active. They did a monthly newsletter. [00:47:00] They, uh, would buy a booth at fanfare, which is, uh, what they don't call it fanfare now. But it's the, the CMA week. It's when they have the big award show it's that week. Uh, and uh, they would come, all these members would come to Nashville and, um, and man that, that booth fanfare booth, and we would spend some time in there, you know, because they press the flesh and all of that, you know, [00:47:30] meet and fans. And so they got us on, uh, uh, the ballot. And I don't know, we, we weren't a party to really what was going on. Uh, but we just, the fan clips said, Hey, you guys that got, are in the nomination for the, a see him, well, put it in the bio.

Speaker 1: Yeah, that that's still a big honor. Hey, a nomination is just as good as winning an award. So

Speaker 2: We also got to do the, [00:48:00] the CMA new faces show. Oh wow. That's the, uh, the CMA. And um, I started doing other things, got my insurance licenses. I got my real estate license. I became a home inspector. I sold, uh, burglar alarms, did a lot of different things. Uh, and then I decided to move down here. My [00:48:30] wife and I opened a bedroom breakfast in the five bedroom, uh, five guest room, bedroom, breakfast in war trace. Uh, I had a home inspection business. I hired a couple other people. All my business was in Nashville. And, but, uh, our Mary was just not good at all. Not good at all. It was a bad time and we thought let's get out of Nashville. Let's get a fresh start. We had had a [00:49:00] daughter by then. She had two boys by her first marriage moved war, trace, everything settled down.

Speaker 2: It was good for a while for a few years. That divorce experience, I think is what brought me back to the Lord. That's what I, I, I felt so lost and she wasn't, uh, she, she did, wouldn't go into church until we got married. And I said, well, you got two boys. [00:49:30] You know, we didn't have her a daughter yet said they need to be exposed to this, you know, and, and you know, you, and I need it, you know? And, uh, I think the, uh, experience of the breakup of that marriage, which was just brutal, it was brutal. The,

the divorce took years, uh, to get done. And it was just, uh, the worst stuff you can imagine. And I, uh, after [00:50:00] I was on my own, I just, I turned, turned back to, to God and, uh, which led me to stop writing secular songs. I start writing gospel songs, joined a church, got my life squared away. I'm the happiest that I've, that I can remember being

Speaker 1: Sounds like you've had quite the journey.

Speaker 2: Uh, it has been

Speaker 1: Lots of ups and downs. It sounds like, but it sounds like you're in a really good spot now.

Speaker 2: It's just, [00:50:30] it's really good. Life is good.

Speaker 1: Well, I think that's a good spot to wrap it up. Yeah. But, um, really appreciate you coming on the show. Uh,

Speaker 2: I've enjoyed this, uh, call it it's therapy. Yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah. I, I totally agree. But, um, I wanna go ahead and plug your website, Jerry Fox music.com. Yes. Uh, go listen to gospel journeyman.

Speaker 2: So I appreciate you, uh, yeah. Letting me be on your

Speaker 1: Show. Absolutely.