

**Oral History Interview of
Rick Bermea**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
November 12, 2016
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Crossroads of Music Archive***

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The Crossroads Artists Project encompasses interviews conducted by the Crossroads of Music Archive Staff members. They hope to document the creative process of artists and songwriters from all across the Southwestern United States.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Rick Bermea who is the bassist for the local cover group the Kinky Wizards. Rick discusses his time spent with multiple bands in Lubbock as well as the Lubbock music scene. He also discusses the Kinky Wizards and provides information on the origin of the band.

Length of Interview: 00:55:02

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Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Sanchez. Today's date is November the 12, 2016. We're at the Southwest Collection in Lubbock, Texas with Rick Bermea. Rick is a musician here in Lubbock and he's currently with the Kinky Wizards and doing some other musical stuff also. Rick, thanks for being here.

Rick Bermea (RB):

Thank you.

DS:

Could you please state your complete legal name?

RB:

My complete legal name is Ricky G., Gonzalez Bermea.

DS:

Could you spell that last name?

RB:

Bermea you spelled it B-e-r-m-e-a.

DS:

Where and when were you born?

RB:

I was born in San Francisco, California on January 26, 1961.

DS:

How about your parents? Their names, what were they?

RB:

My parents—my mother is Maria Gonzalez Bermea. She was born in Corpus—no—Kennedy, Texas. My father is Natividad [00:0:56 ?] Bermea. He was born—that's a good question, down South I believe, somewhere. In Ojinaga, I believe.

DS:

Do you know anything about your grandparents?

RB:

No, I do not. I know my grandmother was named—I can't remember her name—is as far back as that goes.

DS:

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

RB:

No, I do not. I am an only child.

DS:

Where were you raised?

RB:

I was raised mostly in Midland, Odessa, Corpus Christi. My dad was in construction so we moved everywhere. He helped construct large buildings. Once a project was done, we'd move over to the other city. Mainly my parents got divorced here in Lubbock so that's why I ended up here. So, I believe it was 1968 is when they separated and I ended up growing up here.

DS:

What part of town?

RB:

Arnett Benson.

DS:

Arnett Benson. What schools did you go to?

RB:

I went to—I went from McWhorter grade school, to Wolfforth. I went back and forth. Like I said we used to move all over the neighborhoods, North U. I don't know if you remember North U. That's where Mahan is. I went to an all-white school back in Bayless back in 1968. I went there then I went to Matthews Junior High school and then from there Lubbock High.

DS:

What year did you graduate Lubbock High?

RB:

I graduated in 1979.

DS:

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Did you go to Tech after that?

RB:

No, I did not. I went ahead and got married right off the bat, and raised a family.

DS:

Were you already playing music by then?

RB:

Yes, I was. I was dabbling in—I wasn't really into it all the way.

DS:

How did that start?

RB:

I started with—well, it had started back when I was a kid. My parents all used to buy me records and I used to listen to records. My mom was a big Elvis fan so she was always playing Elvis all the time. When they divorced, I started to get into the more early seventies mellow music like Carpenters, and Partridge Family, and stuff like—and I really enjoyed what they—the TV show—I really loved and enjoyed doing all of that stuff and hearing it. Then, I think one summer I got—there was a radio station giving away free music and they gave me a free album. I don't know what it was. I got the cover and it looked weird. I saw these four characters; they had makeup all over them, and they were dressed in suits. I said, well, I'll give it a—I put it on. I didn't think much of the album; it was just a little hard rock. About four months later they came out with another album. I was at a K-Mart and I was looking, and I saw the same characters but they weren't dressed in suits, they were dressed all crazy and I said, Wow I know these guys from the previous album," so I went ahead and got that, put it in, and played it, and I fell in love with that album. The name of the band was called Kiss. From then on my music genre just changed completely like that. Plus, I liked the Beatles back in the day because I was smaller and stuff like that.

DS:

Were you playing an instrument yet?

RB:

No, I did not play an instrument. My dad bought my first guitar when I was thirteen years old. It was a big K-Mart special, so I just jumped on it. I didn't know how to play it enough. It was like self-taught. Back then there was no avenues to learn from it. If you had an uncle that played, you'd learn a little bit from him, but he could only teach you so much; just cords and stuff like

that. So me and my friends got together and we just started learning all together. We'd listen to records and just kept—

DS:

Who were your friends? Who were—

RB:

Well, I had many Hispano friends that played music that are still playing to this day. Arthur's one of them, from the band. Me and him used to get together—David Carrillo, Steve Perez, Ernest Garcia. A lot of those guys came—went up to—are still playing to this day and some of them got into good bands, like Tejano bands, and stuff like that.

DS:

As y'all are sitting around, trying to listen to the music and pick it out, at what point did y'all realize that y'all were getting the hang of it?

RB:

Oh, that would have to be in our—I was in like my mid-twenties. I was starting to get the hang of it so I started getting more serious about it, getting with better musicians and try to go that route. I think in—oh, shoot—I started with a trio group too. I think that was a church—well, it was a church then a trio group—and that's how I got really got the paying gigs. We'd play like quinceañeras, and stuff that like that; like easy listening music. I started learning the stuff from the records. I used to listen to Los Panchos and Los Tres which is all trio groups. That was the thing—was our first legit paying group. We were called Poquito Sol. I don't know if you—

DS:

Poquito Sol.

RB:

Yeah. That was like 1991-92. Then—from then on we—I left that group, and I wanted to pursue more of a guitar, electric, group. Our first group was a country group, we played country music. We were called Renegade.

DS:

Ah, that name.

RB:

Renegade. So that's where I met Noe, Noe Hernandez. That's where—actually, he—I met him through an ad in the music store, and it said, "Drummer for hire." It had his number, it said, "797-1234." I was like, "Nah that can't be right, '1234', who has that number?" So he was the

only that—so I went and grabbed it and called him up. He turned out to be a good drummer. The other guys in the group was Armando Flores. He was in the Renegade too. I don't know if you know him from—he used to play Tejano and he actually still does. Well, he used to, not anymore. He plays mariachi now. He's a real good singer. They call him Sunny Flores, I don't know if you've heard of him.

DS:

Sunny Flores. I think I may know the name Armando Flores.

RB:

Yeah, he plays for Mariachi Mi Tierra right now.

DS:

Mi Tierra.

RB:

We met up with him too and he was with Poquito Sol for a little bit. Just for a little while. Then the other guy was, I believe, Johnny Mendoza. He has a brother named Albert Mendoza. He was kind of—almost kind of made it a little bit. He went to Nashville. I don't know if you knew his music at all. He had some original stuff. He was for a little short time. Then from then—I got out of the music—I had kids—I had gotten divorced. I got remarried, got kids with that, I got out of the music scene for a while, and then about a few months later I got back into it then we formed the Kinky Wizards in 2001 and we've been together ever since.

DS:

Well, I'd like to talk about the Kinky Wizards but please—let's talk about Renegade. First of all, how did you decide to start a country band? How'd you get the name?

RB:

Actually, me and Johnny Mendoza were the first ones to start that band. He was the one that was looking for a band, and, like I said, I played guitar and I told **Mark** [00:08:28] "I've never played country but I'll learn the style" and I did, I learned it. From then we got me and him, we got Noe involved, and then from Noe we got Sunny involved. We used to play at, like, the Silver Bullet, a little hole in the wall, Jiggers Up. I don't know if you remember that bar.

DS:

Yeah, I remember the name.

RB:

Yeah, right there. We used to play there too, also. That's basically the two places, and then we'd play private gigs and stuff like that. We're together, like, about three-four years I believe.

DS:

What were you playing?

RB:

I played guitar and like—what do you mean?

DS:

I meant what music.

RB:

Oh, like kind of music. It was progressive country—you would have to ask me—like Alabama. All modern day country back in the early nineties.

DS:

A long ways from Kiss.

RB:

Yes, way long ways from that. I've always tried to get into that type of band but back in the day, people weren't too acceptive around that kind of music. There'd be times where—when I was doing the rock thing, in the early seventies or mid-seventies, it was considered the devils music. (laughter) Times have really changed. There wasn't even avenues to go to back in the day to go play.

DS:

So after you left the band and Renegade, did Renegades shut down at the time?

RB:

They kept going, they kept going. They got other members. I don't know who exactly who they got, but I think they changed their name and I can't remember the name they changed, but they went separate directions. But from that band spawned other bands that are local today that are still around, like the local Nobodies. I don't know if you've heard of them. Shane Rodgers band, he's real popular around here. He was one of the guys that took my place back in the day. There was a lot of spawns of different bands all the time. If one band started something, it would spawn to something else.

DS:

Did Renegade ever do any recordings?

RB:

No, we didn't. We did some demos but it was just cover demos to get into bars but that was it.

DS:

Well, let's talk about the Kinky Wizards. You were kind of away from music. I think Noe said he had gotten away from music also. What made y'all decide just to come back together?

RB:

Well, Noe at the time was playing in a country band, another country band. It wasn't Renegade but it was a different one, and I ran into Marty—Well, now, Marty was another guy that liked Renegade. He was always trying to get into the band, into Renegade, but we would never let him in because he wasn't up to par as far as playing. After Renegade broke up, I guess he practiced and got better. (laughs) I guess. Then we met up at—me and Marty—I saw him at a post office, and he asked me, "Hey Rick, I'm getting this band together with Noe." Well, I knew Noe so—I knew Marty but I wasn't too keen on the idea because I knew the way Marty was musicianship wise. I basically told him, "Well, let me just go check it out and go hear you play. I know Noe can play well, but I want to hear you play." Sure enough we got together and I heard Marty playing and we had another guitar player, his name was Phil. I can't remember his last name but he's a great guitar player. He sounded pretty good so I said, "You know what, I think I might want to be interested in doing this." So that was the first version of Kinky Wizards, was us four. Now, Phil, we—he left the band two years later after we got together and that's when we got Arthur. No, no, actually I take it back; we got this other gentleman, I can't remember his name. Bobby, Bobby was his name. He was an okay guitar player but he wasn't—the guy like Phil so I kept telling Marty, "Let's try this guy, Arthur Ramos. He's a really good guitar player." So we got him.

DS:

So what was the earliest music y'all were playing?

RB:

The earliest—well it was like nineties music or—we started with Vertical Horizon, bands I ain't even heard of—Pearl Jam—even though—I was—you got to think, I was changing diapers at the time that the band formed and I was out of the music business so I didn't know what's really going on, so they kind of educated me on what was going on. Pearl Jam, Vertical Horizon, Tonic—that's another band. That's it. They were new back then.

DS:

You had mentioned early on how when you first started playing you started picking the notes and chords out, did you get better at it as time came along?

RB:

Yes, I did. The media kind of helped too. You get on YouTube nowadays and you can learn stuff just right there—but yes, I started picking it up. Matter of fact, I switched instruments when I went to the Kinky Wizards. I was the guitar player in Renegade then I went to the bass so I became the bassist from that point on.

DS:

What was the biggest change for you for becoming the bassist?

RB:

Bigger strings. It was just trying to learn the style. I never had played bass in my life. I mean, it wasn't very hard but there was a lot of things that—I wasn't a finger player, I was a—you know, you play guitar—well it depends what kind of guitar you're playing. You can with a flat pick and that was me, or electric guitar, but when you went to bass, I wanted to do the finger style and that really tore up my hands—loose hands. I finally got the hang of it and got better at it.

DS:

So you just had to start listening and instead of picking out the guitar, you were picking out the bass part?

RB:

The bass parts, yeah. I used to listen to Geddy Lee from Rush, Billy Sheehan, all of these bass heroes now that are real good—Victor Wooten, oh my god he's so incredible. I don't know if you've heard of him. Amazing bass player. He's like a solo artist though, but he gives you inspiration to get better. Then I got into the disco. I started listening to disco lines and said, "Wow, that's pretty neat." The slapping part, the picking, the arpeggios. Just all kinds of crazy stuff that they did.

DS:

Makes you a better player.

RB:

Yes, yes it does.

RB:

So once y'all got together, at what point did y'all decide to start taking on gigs?

RB:

Soon after, actually we always tried—back when we first started in the 2000s, the main place to play there was Bleachers. I don't know if you remember that club, Bleachers. Everybody, the depot district was brand new, and everybody—if you wanted to get in the crowd of playing you had to go play at Bleachers. Marty was always about—he wanted to be like the Electric Gypsies. I don't know if you've heard of that band. He said, "Man, we got to be like those guys. Let's be like them." I kept telling Marty, "Well that's great. Yeah, we can be like that, but let's pick our own music. I know we're just all cover music, let's do different stuff than what they do."

Eventually we got a little better than them every time we played, but we could never get into Bleachers, we always played across the street. There was another little bar we used to play out there. They would play and they would pack the place, and we would play and no one would be there.

DS:

Was that at Klusoz? Because that was catty-corner.

RB:

Yeah, it was catty-corner. It was across the street the other way. Frankenstein's, Frankenstein's was there, yes. Dane, Dane would—the name of the owner was Dane—he would always—he gave us our first shot to play publicly. Like I said, we weren't the best, but we got better every time we played; but there was always Bleachers. Then what changed all—they had a big ol' jam and Electric Gypsies and us played together. We got to play first then they played after us. I think that's when everything changed. We started to getting a little better than them because we kind of—I don't want to say blew them away but they kind of like, "Whoa, these guys are a force to be reckoned with."

DS:

Well did y'all go into that performance thinking, We've got to pick it up a notch tonight?

RB:

Yes, we did. Yes, we did. We had to pick it up a notch. That was Marty's dream, he always wanted to be better than the Electric Gypsies. I always told Marty too—the drummer, he sits behind the drums so he can't—he's very limited—he was the main singer—very limited what he could. I was telling Marty, "You're out in the front, dude. You can run around and do all of this crazy stuff. He can't do that. You need to take advantage of that." So that's what he would do. He got the people riled up, and crazy, and stuff like that. That's how we started getting better, putting on shows like that back when we were younger. We used to jump around a lot. Now it's like—

DS:

How long were y'all playing there at Bleachers?

RB:

We played there until they finally shut the bar down. They changed owners then it kind of went down. The guy that used to own it sold it to another gentleman—I can't remember his name. He didn't maintain the place very well, then the depot district started going down and got a little—what do you call it when it goes down, bad neighborhood—to what it is now. We started getting other avenues, other places to play. I know the Office Bar came up back then, then the Oyster Bar then—what's the one on 50th—Spoon, Texas Spoon. That was our main gig right there, and there was other little bars we used to play. I always told Marty, "Look, bars are always going to change." Because he was always into Bleachers—"You know what, Bleachers' not going to be around forever, I guarantee you." Within two or three years, it was gone. "You got to find the next hot bar, man. You always got to be looking for the next hot bar."

DS:

As far as performance place, I guess Bleachers was probably the best place to perform because it was bigger.

RB:

At the time, yeah. It's more of a college crowd and it was kind of a mixed crowd—our crowd—our aged crowd, and then the college crowd. So we had to—our music was more younger type music, whereas now it's more an older crowd. You got to think, those kids back then are raising kids now. They're having kids and raising them so they don't get to go out and party very much. So we regressed and went back, "Well let's go to the people that are like our age, they have no more responsibilities." So we played for their style so they come out and see us.

DS:

When did y'all decide that's what y'all needed to do?

RB:

Oh, about four or five years ago we decided to do that. We noticed that our crowd was changing; not too many young people came out and saw us anymore, so we decided, "Let's go back even further," and started doing more eighties. When we first started they always called us an eighties band. We were never an eighties band. We did nineties and 2000s and they always kept calling us an eighties band only because we did a couple of tunes in the eighties and we got labeled as an eighties band. I guess after a while we just stopped fighting and then just be an eighties band to see what happens.

DS:

An eighties band. So you were always just a little bit ahead of where you had started, personally, in seventies.

RB:

Yes, I always—

DS:

Did y'all ever throw in a Kiss tune in there?

RB:

Oh, yes we did. We used to throw Kiss tunes, and actually, we went all the way back to the fifties. Fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties—we do it all. We do hip-hop, we do all styles. I know this new music that's coming out, it's more vocal—what do you call it—soloist artists. It's a little harder to copy. There's not too many more bands out there anymore when you think about it. I don't know what direction the music is going to but it's—but there's some good bands still out there.

DS:

And locally, how has the music scene changed locally?

RB:

There's some very, very—actually there's quite a few bands more than what we did when we started. There was only very few premiere bands, local bands here, back in the , which was in the seventies and eighties. I know Darren Welch was one of them. He's been around since the early seventies. Other than them, we're the other ones that—we were around as long as 2001 but they've been around longer—there's another one, Element. They've been around since nineteen—I think they formed like in '76 or '77 but they were called by a different named. They were called TNT Showband. I don't know if you remember them. They had a horn section in there and they played all funk.

DS:

I think the one that started that was Gilbert Flores. He was our—he's our county commissioner.

RB:

Realiez. [00:21:39] Yeah, okay, I know what you're talking about.

DS:

I know he had put together a band and some of those players are now Element.

RB:

Oh, okay, yes. Some of the guys are still original from back in the seventies: Freddy the bass player, the guitar player Mike. He's, I believe—and the drummer, I believe—I can't remember the drummer's name, but those are the only three guys that are original from back when they started, because I remember they played our junior-senior prom. I was a junior and that was 1978 when they played for us.

DS:

Out there at Lubbock—

RB:

In Lubbock High—actually they played right here at the UC Center. We had our prom here and they did well. Of course they were younger. They had a horn section and everything. It was good times, like in disco music.

DS:

As you were growing up and—then once you started playing music, who were your idols? You mentioned a little bit in the bass side about as far as guitar. Who did you want to sound like?

RB:

I was always a big—I wasn't really a Guitar Hero guy. I just—to me it was more about the music as a band, not the individual, whereas when Eddie Van Halen came out everybody wanted to play like him. To me it wasn't about that. I'm more into the seventies style where it's—you have a good, hard guitar player but it's all about the singing, the arrangement of the song, the words, the feel of the beat and everything. To me, I've always been about that and I've never been about, "I like this guy because he just—I'm trying to emulate him." I never tried to do that.

DS:

You've never been—tried to be a shredder?

RB:

No, never tried to be. I'm a slow hand guitar player. I'm like Clapton, I play that style. A little chicken picking and country, that's about it. I never got into Hair Bang stuff. I just don't like that stuff.

DS:

So what's it like now that y'all have made the change and adjusted to being older with the older crowd?

RB:

It's kind of weird now because we kind of regrouped—well, like, this past weekend had two gigs. We played Friday for an older crowd. We played our normal disco and all of that stuff, and seventies. Then Marty had got us a college gig—job—well we hadn't done those—that one in a long, long, long time. When we did it was—I was scared because, How are these young people going to react to this stuff that we do? Actually, they really don't like it; they like the eighties. We did some of their type of music from back when we used to do, when we started, and they really enjoyed it. We had them going crazy.

DS:

Well, that's good knowing that you can still touch them a little bit.

RB:

Yeah, touch them a little bit. They liked it.

DS:

Might open up some more opportunities.

RB:

Oh, yeah. We try to stay away from the craziness of the college sting, but they keep calling us and we go, "Well, we don't really want to do that." It's just—not because we don't want to do it but because they get a little too crazy; beer spilling everywhere then they tear up your stuff. We always try to not get those types of gigs, but they're still around.

DS:

I've never talked about that with anyone but you do have to look out for your gear while you're out there.

RB:

Oh, yeah, definitely. We've learned from the past, always try to rent a PA. If they tear it up it won't be yours. We'd bring our cheap stuff. Hate to say it but we bring our cheap stuff and then—that way it can get tore up.

DS:

I think a lot of people do that because no one is going to be listening to how finely tuned your instrument is. As long as the music sounds good and drinking—

RB:

They feel the beat and the words and they're okay with it; they're happy. They get a little crazy.

DS:

So, do you still enjoy playing music as much as playing for—

RB:

Yes, I really love it. That's always been my passion. I tried to get out of it, I've tried to quit—I think the most I've quit is about two years and I just—it was driving me nuts. I could not function, something was always wrong. I feel like every day people say, "It's not me, I can do this," and I didn't.

DS:

How old are your kids now? You mentioned them—

RB:

My kids would be, I guess, twenty-nine is my oldest son and my daughter's twenty-seven, I believe.

DS:

Do either of them play music?

RB:

Yes, my—actually both of them were musical. My daughter was into piano, she played piano, but she never had the passion to do it. She was more into what—she followed her mom into the business world, so she's doing business stuff. She's a Tech graduate, from here. My son, he started his own band and got into—he went to South Plains for sound engineering, and he has his own band, and they're called Vice Versa. They're on Spotify if you want to go check them out. It's a new type of music they're playing; it's younger music. It's still rock but it's kind of like—they call it "chilled out rock" or something like that. If you get a chance, listen to that; Vice Versa.

DS:

What's the difference between that and what you play?

RB:

Less leads; it's more rhythm and just about the beat and the words. Matter of fact, one the guys that I used to play back in the Hair Band days, that I almost got into but I didn't, I played with his dad—the singer's dad, I used to play with him. Manuel Gonzalez, I don't know if you—back in 1982 I think I played with him.

DS:

What was his—

RB:

We had like a Thin Lizzy cover band. He used to do all of the Gary Moore stuff and I would do the other Thin Lizzy guy—I can't remember his name. We had an African American bass player and he was very good, very good.

DS:

What was the name of the group?

RB:

Straight Jacket, I believe. Back in '82, I believe. Anyway, he ended up playing for hair bands and after a while he just quit and got out of it. I hadn't seen him in years, actually since '82, and then I ran into him like last year, and I found his son and my son were playing together. (laughs) so, "Wow, okay." They really sounded good.

DS:

What's his son play?

RB:

He's a singer. He's a great guitar player too; he plays bass guitar, but he chose to sing in this group. Everybody is just playing. I think it's a five piece band.

DS:

You mentioned that your son had gone South Plains so they went more of the traditional; learning to read music, learning how to play like that.

RB:

Oh, yeah. They're an all original band, no covers; it's all original. Actually, my son has his own home studio. Actually, he had an interview with somebody from Tech also, and they were discussing home studios versus real studios and how everything's changing to where everything you can do yourself now. You don't to depend on a big studio to do work for you when you can just find the little guy and it almost sounds the same.

DS:

In fact, in our building we have the Crossroads of Music Archive. As part of that, next door at the main library, we have recording studios over there.

RB:

Oh, really?

DS:

The Crossroads of Music Archive recording studios.

RB:

Yeah, I've heard of them.

DS:

It's kind of like the same process there. They just go in there and do their own stuff.

RB:

Exactly.

DS:

So, does your son every ask you for advice or—

RB:

Oh, yeah. Sometimes he does but I tend to give him more than what he asks, because they get into a situation and I say, "Well, this what you got to do when it comes down to this." He tends to listen quite a bit.

DS:

Is it more about the music or the business?

RB:

I think it's—right now it's just about the music. The business—they don't play very often and there's not really a venue here for them to—for their type of music because it's so new and it's different. I think they want to get into the touring part about it. They don't want to actually—I'm sure they want to make money, but they don't foresee it happening here; they have to go to a bigger city to where that music is more open. I know Jake's brings those type of bands here sometimes; like Circa Survive. There's a band—they kind of sound a little bit like them, but not quite. I think that's what he wants to do.

DS:

You mentioned that they want to tour—that's the one thing y'all really didn't really do with Kinky Wizards since y'all were all family men; y'all pretty much just stayed here.

RB:

I think Marty was the one that really didn't want to go. He has a good job and he didn't want to risk—which I respected that and I didn't want to—we did make a CD, an all original CD, and it was—it turned out pretty good and we got a real good response, but he decided that he didn't

want to go that route. We were all surprised too. We always kept bugging him about it, “Hey man, let’s do our regionals and let’s do it” and he says, “No.” I think—personally I think it scared him, because we came out and we got a good response; people were getting into it. I don’t know if it scared him or—he just didn’t—to him, I think, it was more of a hobby than what he wants to do; just stay in town. So yeah, it was kind of weird—I don’t know.

DS:

I understand that. I’ve talked to several people like—you’ve heard of Los Premiers; they’re on the Walk of Fame and their general manager, when they got to the point when they had to decide, “Are we going to be a touring group or what are we going to do?” A lot of his guys that were going to Tech or whatever, or had jobs that they didn’t want to leave, got out and so he got a new group and that’s the group that did the touring.

RB:

Wow, really.

DS:

They had to make a decision; they said, “Are you a musician or is this—are you just—is this just a hobby?”

RB:

It’s a big step, man, it’s a big step and I think Marty didn’t want to do that.

DS:

Because you got to really commit to that.

RB:

I was ready for it. I said, “Yeah, I think I was ready for it” at the time and Arthur was, and Noe was kind of on the fence about it, he never was sure, but we respected that. Like I said, we’re—all four of us, we all have different styles of music. Noe likes more pop, I like pop and rock, Marty’s more alternative music, Art likes the heavier stuff, but we tend to come together. We have our differences but we still come together and play.

DS:

Do you know if anybody has a copy of that CD that y’all put together?

RB:

Actually, yes we do, somewhere. I got to find it.

DS:

If y'all could at least donate us a copy of it, that'd be great.

RB:

Yes, yes. We will do that.

DS:

That way this music, 500 years from now, will be—there'll be a CD floating around.

RB:

There you go. There you go. We'll definitely get you a copy. Just let me know.

DS:

If there's any music that goes along with it, that's where it—like the scores or anything like that.

RB:

Oh, like the lyrics.

DS:

The lyrics and all of that. That—

RB:

I'm going to have to talk to Marty about that. He has all of the lyrics written down somewhere.

DS:

That could easily be turned into an exhibit that we could put here or travel around.

RB:

Wow, really. Okay. Cool, man, that would be awesome. I will definitely mention that to him.

DS:

And anything like—because local bands—you always put posters and stuff up, because it was a day of putting up posters, not like the Internet now. So if you have any of that stuff—

RB:

I believe I still do.

DS:

And gig photographs, that type of stuff, is—

RB:

I believe we have plenty of gig photographs of back—he has an archive of them on a—he put all on a—what do you call that?

DS:

On a little flash drive?

RB:

Yes. He has them all on there.

DS:

That's even easier to copy right there. Just upload it.

RB:

I'll ask him—well you can ask him when you—have you interviewed him yet?

DS:

I've talked to him and tried to get him to sit down for an interview also. I've called him once and he was at work, so he said he'd call me afterwards but he didn't call me back—but I'll try next week. The thing is with him also it's like—I work during the day so I have to do it on—go like—

RB:

I hear you, man. I hear you.

DS:

That's the nature of our job. We wind up working a lot of weekends and after hours.

RB:

I'm sorry, man. [laugh]

DS:

But that's what the story is. Because it's—you got to have a real job.

RB:

That's right, that's right. That's true, that's true. Cool, man.

DS:

Can you think of anything I haven't asked that you think that you'd like to talk about?

RB:

The future, maybe? The future. I don't know what the future is for us. We're going to keep going. Noe doesn't—told me he wants to keep going until he retires, and after that he wants to keep on going. He's a big Beatles fan and he goes, "If Paul McCartney's still doing it, I'm going to still be doing it," I'd said "Okay." [laughter] I told him, "You know what, Noe, I'll be right next to you, man, doing the same thing. We'll still be playing the same old songs from the eighties or seventies and I'll be there doing it with you." We—me and Art also—we have side projects too. Art plays with another band called Early Morning Rain. They're Hispano *tambien* [also]. They got about two or three Hispanos in that group. Then at one time we had another group called Los Iguanas. We had that—I tried to do my own project. I was trying to introduce Spanish rock to this community here. I don't know if you're familiar with too much Spanish rock.

DS:

A little bit of it. What were you trying to bring in?

RB:

This group—have you heard of this group, *Enanitos Verdes*?

DS:

No.

RB:

They're from Argentina. There's a lot of good—*Maná*—you've heard of *Maná*, right? El Tri, they're from Argentina. There's a whole other—other than Tejano in this area, and *Norteños* there's another—whole other genre that we—that I tried to do myself. Art was helping me, my wife sang. It went very well at first. The people were like, "Wow, this is different. It's different." After a while we wouldn't get a gig as much only because the fact that I wasn't very good at booking the gigs, and the type of music we did—some people kind of frowned on—"Oh, they're doing Spanish." [laughter] Now, more so.

DS:

And that's the difficulty also, trying to introduce the Spanish language. Sometimes it's hard because then you kind of limit your audience a little bit too.

RB:

Well, most of our audience was Hispanics. When they heard Los Iguanas they thought it was a Tejano band so they would come out, "Well, this ain't a Tejano band, this is a rock band." We would cover a lot of Del Castillo—you've heard of Del Castillo. We would cover some of their stuff too—but we had our hardcore fans that they were going "Thank you." They would say,

“Thank you for doing this type of music. Nobody else does this type of music. It’s great. We will be there as long as y’all play. We will be there.”

DS:

What time were y’all playing this? What time frame?

RB:

I believe about three or four years ago. We used to play at a Buucas all the time. I don’t know if you remember Buucas.

DS:

Because there was another group but they were doing more of their classical Spanish type songs and that was *Daré*.

RB:

That it was. See *Daré*

DS:

Was right before y’all—

RB:

Right before, which was—we were going with [REDACTED] [00:37:25] and Arthur. Arthur was involved in that project too. Who was the other guy? Oh, Eddie Contreras. He was in there. He was the bass player.

DS:

And Danny.

RB:

Danny—well, Danny was in the Iguanas too. We’re all interconnected.

DS:

So then y’all are a good—I mean, if you got guys like that, then y’all are really top notch musicians because all of those guys were phenomenal.

RB:

Oh, yeah. All of those guys—like I said, Art played with several groups, Danny write and I was playing with *Equis*. I don’t know if you’ve heard of *Equis*.

DS:

Equis. Know I didn't hear of that.

RB:

It's a—well, they have two bands. They have Undercover—have you heard of that name?

DS:

I've heard that name.

RB:

It's Don Cervantes—I guess a son from Cervantes and Company—he has that band, and the guitar player was from Cervantes and Company. They're really, really good. Really good band. Danny plays in another band that—it's the same band, but they changed their name and do Tejano. They're called *Equis*. Go figure. Then they have the rock group which is called Undercover. Then Don Cervantes' son, he's trying—he's a solo artist. He's Sergio Cervantes I believe is his name. He's a solo artist. He's fixing to come out with a CD, but he needs a band to back him up. So I was telling him about my son's band because the singer's fixing to quit because he has responsibilities and kids and stuff like that, so I'm trying to hook them up together and maybe see what happens from there. It's all interconnected.

DS:

It's all interconnected and going strong it sounds like.

RB:

Oh, yeah. Some of my old bandmates, like Ernest Garcia, plays with *Tesoro* [Treasure]. Remember the band *Tesoro*?

DS:

Oh, yeah.

RB:

He plays with another Spanish group—I mean a rock group—but I can't remember the name. It's a new group, but their old *Tesoro* guitar player—he's a [REDACTED] [00:39:34], a gringo and he's plays with me right now in an acoustic that I have on the side. We're called Five Play. It's three females and two guys.

DS:

Where do y'all play?

RB:

We play at Cujo's. Mostly at Cujo's out there. It's all cover music but it's more geared to the ladies. They do real pretty harmonies and—he's an amazing guitar player. Oh my god, he's amazing, and I just back him up, either bass—I have this thing where I could play the bass, the ukulele, or the guitar, so I back him up in there.

DS:

So you're staying busy now?

RB:

Oh, yeah. Then I play Mariachi too. I play with Mariachi Mi Tierra on Thursdays.

DS:

Oh, do you? Well that's probably where you've seen me, because I've gone to a lot of performances of y'all. I have a niece that's Baile Folklórico dancer so she always likes to go see y'all.

RB:

I noticed your niece.

DS:

Jasmine.

RB:

Jasmine, yeah. I believe I know Jasmine. Of course, with Mariachi Mi Tierra there was Sonny. he plays mariachi when he was with Renegade, and he used to play with Tejano bands, and Poquito Sol, the little trio we started with—we're all like—at one time or another we all played with each other, and sometimes we're still playing with each other in different bands, different projects.

DS:

Mariachi musicians are from everywhere, like—what's her name, Estella? Is that her name? I interviewed her, and I was talking to her the other day. She's with—get my—I have her phone—I don't have her card here. She's a mariachi violinist and singer but she had been classically trained and that's what she was studying at Tech, and while she was here she fell into a plane with some people. They invited her to join them, so now she's a mariachi performer.

RB:

Really? Wow. Estella. I can't remember her. How old is she?

DS:

She's about our age. She's a bit older than me. She was here in like '70, '74 or so.

RB:

Oh, yeah. That's a long time ago.

DS:

The time you were graduating high school she was graduating Tech right before that.

RB:

We used to get a lot of violin players from Tech to play with mariachi. We had some phenomenal players through the years. We've gone through so many sets of violin players, only because they graduate and they leave the group.

DS:

Because they're not from here.

RB:

No. We had, actually, a professor with—one of them was a professor. Elnando? He was a—he played for the Lubbock Symphony. I think he taught here at Tech. He was from Honduras.

DS:

He was a professor of, what—was he—Spanish, was it? I know he's—I know who you're talking about—his last name—started with a C—but I know who you're talking about.

RB:

He was the best thing that happened to that group because he was one of those guys that could just write music out by just—not even hearing it—he just comes in and he just—and we made a Christmas CD, mariachi Christmas CD, and it was amazing. The arrangements were all classically arranged, and everything but it was all a mariachi band.

DS:

Again, *los tienen toda ri*.

RB:

Yes, I do. I'll let you have one. We had a great group, great vocals, great violins. He brought in a couple of people to help on the—to do some trumpet tracks and some—to make it bigger, to make it sound bigger. Yes, I'll definitely get you once of those too. I have them somewhere.

DS:

It's all interesting. It's all part of the music fiber of this country and this community for sure.

RB:

Definitely, I'll get you one of those too. That was a great CD we made.

DS:

We were talking earlier about the stuff you did with Kinky Wizards, the original stuff. What type of music was that? Did it lean more to one genre?

RB:

It was kind of—like I said, we had different styles so every song was different. We had one that was kind of heavy. We had one that was kind of—at the time there was—we had one song that was kind of like during the Gulf War so we did kind of like an Arab sounding song. It was kind of weird. Then we had an alternative—Marty likes alternative, so it was a little weird. We did—Noe's a good song writer. He has these collections of songs that he writes but we never perform or we never do, and we recorded one of his songs and it came to be one of the real popular ones. Then Marty was kind of—he's kind of a little bit of a—he goes very out there sometimes that we—there's some little bit—what do you call it—explicit songs on there. Maybe one or two tracks but not too many. It was kind of, "Okay. The music's great but the words are—" You have to listen to it.

DS:

It is the nature of the business. If you're doing anything hip-hop it's like a given, it's not going to—

RB:

I guess so, yeah. I always frowned upon that. I said, "Man, you don't have to do that," but I was okay with it after a while. But yeah, we'll definitely get you a CD of them both. Like I said, the music was all different. It was all different styles on that CD because we, like I said, we were too much—one guy was too much this way and one guy was too much this way. Me and Noe were mostly in the middle of the road kind of, Well let's do more pop, stuff like that.

DS:

So you were doing that pop? That's good, I'd really like to listen to that, and get a copy for the collection. Like I mentioned, one thing we like to do—we like to store the history but also we make exhibits. And kind of why we started going in to—trying to find Mexicanos that were playing rock music was—you've probably heard of Jesse Guitar Taylor, and Andy Wilkinson who's also a performer, his office is two doors down from mine, he had interviewed Jesse and he was going to an exhibit of his. And one of the key stories when he was talking to Jesse was—he

asked me to—who were you trying to emulate? Who showed you how to play? It was these two Mexican kids that lived down the street. They were playing in their garage. He heard them, went over there and—so all of this—that’s the story with a lot of people. They heard somebody play and then they went over—

RB:

Just trying to emulate somebody else. I guess everybody’s story’s different from if you ask somebody different. I mean, everybody—you know what I’m talking about anyways. Everybody’s a little different about that.

DS:

We’d interviewed Lee Cariño —I don’t know if you’ve ever heard the name—but Lee was not a performer, he wrote music. He actually wrote poetry and other stuff. He was in Tejano music and he said—he had told us, “Well, if I can write this stuff—.” So he started writing stuff and it just so happened that one of his co-workers was the wife of one of the Hometown Boys, and she told him—and she found out that he wrote music and she was like, “They’re looking for new stuff,” so he got together with them. They were the first band to play his stuff. Somos Los Gatos was the first song they took of his.

RB:

I think I remember that one, yes.

DS:

Major hit. It played all over the world. So that’s like—he donated all of this stuff—that’s what I was talking about—he donated all of his lyrics, copies of the music, and all of that, and photographs, and so we had an exhibit at the end of the year that was traveling. By traveling, I mean here in this town. It’s in our building, at the City Hall, at the airport, we have a space up there that we always have a collection out there. At the Tech club, we also put exhibits out there. Of course—I used to be with Fiestas so whenever we had something with Fiestas we’d try to put something out there.

RB:

Fiestas. Oh yes, they were better back then, back in the nineties. [laughter] Okay, I’ll stop.

DS:

I can’t talk about that, but—because I’m opinionated.

RB:

When we stop we’ll talk about it.

DS:

Well, with that note, I guess we've probably reached a spot for [picks up recorder 00:48:19]—it's not a long interview but it's very concise, and we did cover quite a bit of ground. You mentioned the groups that are going on now. How do you see the music, locally, changing?

RB:

Really, I can't see—in the past you could see, “Well, it's going to go this. Going to go to this direction. That direction.” Now I really don't know, man. I really don't know where it's going. If my son's band is an indicator of what's going to happen, maybe it goes into that direction, which is what they call chilled-out rock. It's still rock but it's a little more tamed; not too many leads and stuff like that but that's just one style. You can't really say where it's going to go, and I really don't know where it is now.

DS:

Is it driven more by live performance or by the Internet?

RB:

I think so now. I think live performance and Internet, two separate things, but a lot of people like just watching it on the Internet, but to hear them live it's different. I've always been a live guy. Every chance I get I go see a live band that I like. Right now I'm into this Spanish rock thing and I wanted to see Alejandre Guzman—I don't know if you've—she's a rocker and I never have seen her. She was supposed to come to Dallas, and they canceled because I guess not enough ticket sales, but I'll get another chance. I've seen this band, *Enanitos Verdes*.

DS:

Are there any local venues where they would be?

RB:

They would not come here, no. They just—there's no venue for it here. I think in Lubbock, back in the seventies, had better people coming into venues here. We had one venue called, in 1976, called The Rocks. Do you remember that?

DS:

I spent many a night there.

RB:

They used to bring, back then, the early acts before they made it big. They brought Pat Benatar—I don't know if you remember that—Iggy Pop, The Police came there before they got it big, and because of the owner, he was from New York City, so he would book all of these bands. He knew the connection between all of these bands that were touring. I can't remember—some artist

said, "If you want to make it,"—this was back in the seventies—"If you want to make it, you have to go through the bible belt, and Lubbock was one of the stops. Some artists had said it's real big now, and that's where everybody went. Ted Neugent, Boston, Sammy Hagar, Van Halen, all of these bands.

DS:

It was a change. I remember that by '79—I think it was—culture clash came but not here, they came to Amarillo, so we had to drive up there.

RB:

I think what happened—it got too big. It got too commercialized by the eighties, mid-eighties. It got too commercialized and they—"Oh, okay. We can make a buck out of—" the corporations said, "We can make a buck out of this," so it became corporate. So they made this decision, "Well, Lubbock doesn't have enough people or enough ticket sales so we don't want to go." It's really, really changed.

DS:

You mentioned how the depot district changed from when it first started. Is it back to where it was before or how is it—

RB:

It's got more hip-hop. It's really, to me, not a good place to go. I know they have one rock bar there, but not too many big artists, it's more metal people. I see some—metal's still coming up in a lot of groups. Local groups are doing a lot of metal. That's the only other rock bar that does that other than Jake's that does that heavier music. Those are the only two bars. The other bars are a little more tamed, more cover music and stuff like that; like Spoon, O-bar [Oyster Bar]. I like the O-bar because they bring all kinds of music in there; a bunch of young kids, old kids—I mean old people—young kids so the original bands go in there. I'm always about the next thing as far as watching, like, original people. If you got an original group, I want to see. "Man, that's pretty good." Cover bands you can always go see. But anyway, I love original music and I wish we would be doing that.

DS:

When did you first make the switch from playing somebody else's stuff to playing something original?

RB:

We did that, I believe, in 2007 or eight. We did that, and it felt good running your own bass line, not having to copy another guy's bass line. I'm sure Noe was the same way. It's a little tougher to do because when you record everything's got to fall into place and we—you get to experiment

too also. You get to experiment with music. "If you don't this we can go back track and redo this," and stuff like that. Nowadays it's easier to do than back in the old days because you have all of this technology. You can just squeeze a part in. Instead of recording the whole song, you can just squeeze it in just by splicing it and stuff like that.

DS:

Did you ever mix genres? I know, like, there's a place, Metal and Mariachi.

RB:

We mixed genres too. There's a couple of songs on there that we do rap then we add some Spanish. Like I said, one of them was kind of like rock with a little bit Arabian sounding stuff in the background. So it was kind of weird. It's just stuff like that.

DS:

I think we've covered a lot of ground and I appreciate you for coming in on such short notice. We just got a hold of you last week, and we're already doing an interview. That's outstanding. Well Rick, thank you so much

RB:

Thank you.

DS:

If you've got any leads for us, we're happy to follow up on them, and talk to them because that's—somebody's got to preserve this history. The good thing about this place, it's—we're funded by the state, so it's not like we're going to be out of business next week. [laugh]

RB:

I can tell you many stories too, man. There's a lot to tell. Other musicians too you can try interviewing and stuff like that.

DS:

Sounds good. Thank you so much.

RB:

Thank you. Thank you.

[End of Recording]