Oral history interview with Bill Stevenson, February 29, 2012

Stevenson, Bill
Founder of The Stone Balloon in Newark, Delaware

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CAITLIN: This is Caitlin Davis interviewing Bill Stevenson on February 29, 2012. So I guess we’re going to start. What’s your background? Are you originally from Delaware?

BILL: Nope, I came into Delaware from Pennsylvania on a football scholarship.

CAITLIN: Okay, where in Pennsylvania? I’m from Pennsylvania.

BILL: Okay, whereabouts?

CAITLIN: Delaware County, Drexel Hill.

BILL: Okay, okay. That’s right down the road there. I went to Wyoming Seminary Prep School in Kingston, Pennsylvania, and Coach Mailey and Coach Raymond came up to see two Abington football players at Germantown Academy in Abington, Pennsylvania. I got lucky enough and sacked their quarterback seven times that day. Not only did they come to the University of Delaware, Coach Raymond came up to me and said, “We’d be very interested in you coming over.” That’s the interesting part because 18 months later I walked into Coach Raymond’s office and said, “I just bought Merle’s Tavern. I’m turning it into a rock bar called The Stone Balloon.

CAITLIN: How did that come about? So were you still a student at the time?
BILL: I was a student and playing.

CAITLIN: Then you also bought a bar.

BILL: I was working in the bar. Merle Harris was a very wealthy man. It was literally a half a block on Main Street. That’s why the property was so valued, which led to the demise of the bar in the long run.

CAITLIN: What type of bar was it? What did they play?

BILL: It was a rundown hotel with the capacity of 50 people, a local bar doing $50 a night. It had a little package store. It was literally Merle Harris’ playground.

CAITLIN: So, it was just local dive bar.

BILL: Local dive bar

CAITLIN: Okay. Did a lot of students go?

BILL: No students went there. I didn’t see anybody from campus down there ever, even in the package store. I worked for Merle part-time. He said to me one night, “I have cancer and I’m not going to live for the year and I’m very, very interested in selling this bar,” and I said, “I can make this work. I’m going to change the name and make it a rock bar.” I didn’t know until—

CAITLIN: What was his reaction?

BILL: He said yes. We actually worked out a deal where I had inherited a little bit of money from an uncle. I said, “I’m going to use some of this to renovate and some of this to do this.” Anyway, to make a long story short, I bought the place on August 8, 1971. Walked into Tubby Raymond’s office on August 9, 1971 and said, “Coach, I won’t be playing football this year,” and he thought I was kidding and said, “Get out of my office. Stop joking around.” I mean he actually talks about this in his book.

CAITLIN: Oh really? Were you considered like a good player?

BILL: I was a good player. I would have started. Yeah, I would have started on the national team. I mean that’s neither here nor there. Who knows? I could have been hurt, too, but I bought the bar and we ran into huge problems from the City of Newark trying to get it open. The book explains it perfectly, by the way.

CAITLIN: Okay, I’ll check that out.

BILL: Yeah, you can just skim through it. We got open on February 22, 1972 was the grand opening. It was this week, by the way. It just passed. The 40th anniversary of the bar was just last week, the official opening of it.
CAITLIN: Oh nice. What inspired you to open the bar, like what motivated you besides the fact you just came into money?

BILL: There was nothing to do in Newark, except to go to the Deer Park on [inaudible]. They didn’t have any entertainment then. There was no entertainment. The problem is the Vietnam War was raging. Students hated the military, military hated the students. There were war protests all over. Half of Main Street was vacant. It was dead. There was like a horrible recession going on similar to what we just went through.

The bottom line is I just felt something, that there was a huge void. I had no idea all this was going to happen. I just realized I thought it was going to be a nice, little local bar and “provide entertainment.” I had no idea it was going to make me famous. I mean I still go out and it’s funny what happens to me locally around here. The bar’s been closed for five years.’

CAITLIN: People still recognize you.

BILL: It’s crazy, it’s crazy. The party showed that, everything else. It’s something happened along that Main Street location. It was so magical. Not only for the bands and the people, but everybody that showed up there. It was just a combination of me insisting to see every band ever multiple times because nobody had to come and guess whether the band was going to be good or not. They just assumed it. That gave me the flexibility to bring anybody in I wanted. It wasn’t, “Hey, Bill,”—you’d have to use the payphone—“what’s the band like tonight? Are they good?” That question, for a couple years was never asked.

CAITLIN: Never happened, yeah. Were you always interested in music? Why did you decide to do a rock bar?

BILL: Strangely enough, I’d always loved music. Started out with Motown, the Beatles, the Beach Boys, stuff like that. I was right at the cusp at that music era. I’m considered the perfect age for rock ‘n roll. That’s why so many musicians, like big-time musicians, are between 60 and 70 right now—the Stones, the Beatles. I mean we’re losing them left and right, it’s almost sad, but back then, the first concert I ever went to were the Beach Boys and guess what?

The other night, they were honored at the Emmy’s for a 50th anniversary concert. I don’t know whether you watch the Emmy Awards or not, but the Beach Boys, for the first time in 25 years, all played together as the original people. It was unbelievable. So I love music. I just never expected the place to be like such a powerhouse for music. I mean once we realized we had that opportunity, I went for it. There’s no doubt about it.

I spent so much money; I mean I was a young guy who didn’t care about money. So it didn’t matter whether I spent $10,000 to bring Robert Palmer in knowing I’m only going to gross $8,000. Just the thought never entered my head. I knew I wanted Robert Palmer to be there for the fans because they were showing up Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday making me rich and then I would blow all the money on a [inaudible].
CAITLIN: Excellent. Did you know what it took to run a bar?

BILL: I had no idea. I had no idea and you know what? Nobody else did either. It wasn’t like I hired somebody with experience. A friend of mine had got one piece of advice. It said simply, “You never get up early enough and you always go to bed too late in the bar business.” So I hired my younger brother who couldn’t even come in the bar and I hired the quarterback from the University of Delaware team to play.

All of my friends from the team, by the way, that’s every bouncer at The Stone Balloon, went on to be real famous. Like a lot of the people have—I mean I keep in contact. I’m guessing I have had 1,700 or 1,800 employees at The Stone Balloon, only for the simple fact that every two or three years they graduated and ended up going.

CAITLIN: How long did you own it for?

BILL: My years, technically, were 1971 when I bought it to 1993. That’s officially when the Highway 1 Group took it over.

CAITLIN: Then with them, that closed in 2005?

BILL: 2005, when I wrote the book. I wrote the book because it was closing.

CAITLIN: How do you like the wine house?

BILL: I do like the wine house. You know what? I just did an interview for this magazine. I did the photo shoot. I’m being honored because of The Stone Balloon. In Delaware Today Magazine they have an issue. Their 50th anniversary is the 22nd of March and I am one of 50 people in that magazine that made Delaware a better place for the last 50 years. Yeah, it’s pretty neat. It’s one of the best, coolest things I’ve had. That’s why the only reason I looked at my clock was because—

CAITLIN: If you have to leave at any time, please—

BILL: No, no, 2:30. We’ve got plenty of time. I’m meeting Mike Castle. You know who he is, right?

CAITLIN: Yup.

BILL: Yeah, I’m meeting Mike Castle and Tom Carper and we’re doing a little video shoot over at the Cole Brothers’ co-op.

CAITLIN: That’s so fun.

BILL: Yeah, it’s going to show the night of the party. The party’s on the 22nd. It’s supposed to be like a big surprise.
CAITLIN: I won’t tell anyone.

BILL: Everyone’s telling me about it. It’s supposed to be like a shocker article and everything. By the way, George Thorogood, he’s—the only other entertainer is he and I. Everything else is like politicians, different heads of DuPont, the head of the banks. People that have like done well. I think I’ve done really well for the City of Newark and the State of Delaware. There was nothing until The Stone Balloon came along—no venues, no concerts, nothing.

We went on, I started The Stone Balloon and then I started doing concerts at Delaware. I mean people would drive by Delaware thinking it’s another Pennsylvania county. They didn’t know the difference between Delaware County and Delaware. Growing up in that area, you understand that. You just come shooting right down the road, it’s no big deal. If you’re a musician, you just couldn’t wait to get to Philly. All of a sudden, there was a little stop to have some fun.

CAITLIN: Oh, that’s great. Was it an instant success, do you feel?

BILL: Yes. It had to be. I was so broke; I had to borrow money to give change to do the registers. That’s how broke—we were out of money. It took six months, Caitlin, to get this open. The city fought us. What happened was we were going to open it up and put the band in the corner and we thought that was going to be it. They made us build new [inaudible] and do this. There was a builder, a family that’s still—

CAITLIN: So a complete renovation you did.

BILL: Complete. We never expected it, but guess what? Everybody worked with us. Merle worked with us because he thought: here I am improving his bar, I’m going to fail and he’s going to get the bar back. He admits it. He said, “Look, I didn’t expect you to be so successful.” The good news is I got Merle Harris. He went on to live 20 years.

CAITLIN: Really?

BILL: Yeah, he never died.

CAITLIN: Oh my God, that’s great.

BILL: I mean he did eventually of old age, but not of cancer. He went into remission.

CAITLIN: That probably made him proud, to see what you did.

BILL: Oh yeah and his son and I are still good friends. He held a second mortgage. The bank, reluctantly, they were scared to death that Merle was going to just close the place and leave. They were elated to have someone else with an idea. They liked the idea. The bank is no longer around. They were bought by Sovereign Bank years ago, but still, they were a great, little downtown Newark bank called First Federal.
Had they not approved that first loan—I mean here I am, a guy with no experience, who
basically knew how to waterski, teach waterskiing and play football. We’re going to give him
$170,000 and he’s going to use $30,000 of his own little money here and we’re going to all get
paid back. Well, those days are over, but guess what? They all got paid back and I got to travel
the world. So what the hell?

CAITLIN: Did you drop out of school at this time?

BILL: Never finished. I’m having a race with my daughter right now. We actually made this
little bet of $1,000. She’s got a year left; I’ve got two years left. We’re racing to see who—
neither one of us is in school, by the way, but we have $1,000 bet. I want to inspire her to get
back and finish up her degree, but she’s making all this money right now and she doesn’t want
anything to do with anything other than having her own car and buying this new house. She
doesn’t want to graduate, so I’m trying to get her to do that, but that’s another story.

CAITLIN: I miss college every day. Do you feel that there was other competition once you
opened? Did Deer Park kind of step into gear?

BILL: The Deer Park changed owners a couple of times. They couldn’t compete with us because
what I did was every time we filled up and had a long line, I would build another addition. The
week after the first week of The Stone Balloon, we had to build her back, [inaudible] back and
we were planning the first addition. You were never in the bar, right? You were too young.

CAITLIN: Yeah,

BILL: What it was, was we opened up with one bar and a bar over here in the corner. Then I
built a huge bar. The capacity of the original Stone Balloon was like 310. Within six months, I
built another addition, which doubled the size of the Stone Balloon and we went to 610 with
another big bar and another set of bathrooms and a small storage area. Then I took the big move
a year after that and doubled the size of the place again. That’s how we got to the thousand
people. I sunk the dance floor down. I built a huge stage; I built a loading dock for the stage,
which was unheard of.

So, therefore, nobody could compete with us. Nobody was around. I mean we became the big
venue with unlimited money to spend. So that’s how we squashed the competition by just getting
better and better and better instead of sitting back. We just started getting bigger bands. I started
looking to New York and Washington DC.

That’s why it’s so great you’re doing this thing with the local bands because what it did was, in
the ’70s and ‘80s, with the local bands, they didn’t have a goal. Let’s play a party, let’s do this.
All of a sudden, all these groups you’ve listed right here—the Jack of Diamonds, all these
different bands from Delaware—said, “You know what? We have got to get better. We have got
to get into The Stone Balloon. We’re nothing without being at The Stone Balloon.”
So there were probably 100 bands that never played The Stone Balloon and were probably okay, but these are the [inaudible] that were good enough to figure out how to get in there, how to get the big sound system to write the songs. For example, the Jack of Diamonds and Dakota and all these bands, they never played a cover. It was all original. It gave them the opportunity to become so good that they actually could get in on their own music. That’s what was really neat.

Yeah, they did a song or two every now and then so everybody would come out to dance, but then all of a sudden, Newark embraced them for their original music and that’s what gave them the opportunity to say, “Wow, if we keep this up, you could be the best cover band in the world, it doesn’t mean anything whether you’re playing down the street. We’re selling something that they’ve never heard before.”

So that was huge. Going with the local bands Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday made us the money to bring in the big concerts and Monday night, Snakegrinder, Sin City, they could come in here in their own little way and guess what? Pack the place. We had happy hour prices all night. It was just a big party. What Monday night became was the home for every bartender, waitress and everything from every other bar within 50 miles of Newark.

They knew it. It was the bartender, waitress, laid back. We don’t have to listen to the same old jukebox. We’re going to see something fun here and it was just like going back to the Grateful Dead days that I compare Monday night to. Monday night was literally a night of just these people didn’t have any money to go anywhere else. It was just great.

CAITLIN: How did you judge if the local band was good enough to play?

BILL: Okay, let’s pick one.

CAITLIN: Like would bands just come up to you and say, “We want to play?”

BILL: We heard about them, but they would be on campus. Like the Jack of Diamonds, let’s look at the Jack of Diamonds back in 1975. I’ll never forget Ed Shockley and I mentioned to you earlier one day—the mic wasn’t on—that Ed is one of my best friends in the world. I mean we’ve been through thick and thin together and we’ve had a lot of fun around the world together. He says, “My name’s Ed Shockley. Our band is playing down at Theta Kai. We’ve been working real hard of a year. We think we’re ready to play The Stone Balloon.” I went down, I saw the band. I said, “You guys are fun. Tell me where else you’re playing.” They said, “Well, we’re playing down at the Bottle and Cork at the beach.”

CAITLIN: That’s in Dewey, right?

BILL: That’s in Dewey. “We’re playing the Bottle and Cork Memorial Day weekend. I would jump in my car, drive to the Bottle and Cork and guess what? I saw them and I said to them, “Look, if you guys can do this, this, this,” and I did suggest something very funny. I said, “If you could land a door set, that would be a first. That would be amazing,” and I’ll never forget, Dave Siebert and I love Davey.
He looks at me, he goes, “Bill, if it takes playing a door set to get in The Stone Balloon, you might as well drive back right not because that ain’t happening.” I said, “I’m just suggesting something to go along with all your original music.” I said, “I just don’t think you have it yet.” It was so funny, one of the funniest statements ever. I fell in love with the band. I went and looked at them the end of the summer and I said come on up in September and then they became a huge band for like five or six years. We still do something together. They’re going to play the next party, by the way.

CAITLIN: Okay. Did they play the one in August?

BILL: No.

CAITLIN: You can answer it if you need to.

BILL: Just one second.

CAITLIN: No, that’s fine.

[Break in Audio]

CAITLIN: Okay, so was this the process that they went through? Is that how you usually got local bands? They would come to you; you would see them—yay or nay?

BILL: Never ever were they ever given a chance unless I thought they were ready. Looking back on it, that’s the key to success. It made them better and it made the bar better. The worst thing I see is when—some clubs could have an open mic night or like a trial night and they’ll get their friends in there, but that’s a waste of a night. We didn’t have a wasted night. In the ’70s and the ’80s, The Stone Balloon had no less than 500-700 people in it every night and on a Thursday and a Friday and a Saturday, 1,500-1,800 would come through the door. I mean it was amazing.

Monday nights, packed, 700-1,000 people in the place. Tuesday night, concert night was a whole new game because not only was it sold out in advance because we were not allowed to sell tickets. The ticket issue was one of the biggest issues of the book; that I was not allowed to charge to get into The Balloon. We have to charge a minimum and give back drink tickets. The only reason they changed it was people were getting so drunk, people that didn’t drink, that just wanted to see the bands were drinking. So it turned out to be a disaster. The law backfired, but it was too late to change it for us. It really limited us to what we could do.

On stage, the band was already ready. I could say to anybody, “Hey, look, Shy Town’s coming in. Wait ‘til you hear them, they’ve come out of nowhere. They’ve added Kevin on guitar; Kevin changes the whole band and more vocals.” I’ll never forget when Shy Town came up and said, “Come out here and look in our truck.” I look in the truck and there’s like a full Stone Balloon-sized sound system. I said, “My God, how hard did you guys work to come up with this money to get this sound system and come in and play with it? Yeah, you’re going to make that money back real quick. Let’s go. We’ll see you in three weeks.”
That’s what it was. It was just pushing each one of these guys. Very few of the bands—there weren’t any place to go to see them. It’s like that’s what was so great about The Stone Balloon. We got such a jump on everybody and then all the wannabe Stone Balloons, like I said, couldn’t keep up with us. It was always about the entertainment at The Stone Balloon. Everybody thought location was good. There’s no doubt about it, I got lucky there. The university turning over people every two or three years, huge, but as long as that was a great band on there, that was 99% of the game, trying to keep the drink prices fair and just having fun with everybody.

People came in there to see the band and find a date, period, whether it was a guy or a girl. I bet you right now, at my party of 500 people, 20 of those couples met at The Stone Balloon. In the book, I name probably 100 couples. Since the party and since everybody heard we’re back doing this again, people couldn’t believe it that we had a party and missed it because if they weren’t on Facebook, like most of the people my age aren’t on Facebook, they’re not even looking around.

The thing is, the bands, I just can’t even tell you how important it was that the bands were just perfect and they couldn’t just know an hour. They had to know three hours because everybody at the bar stayed in there three hours. Once they got in and weren’t waiting in line, they weren’t leaving because they weren’t getting back in until they go to the back of the line. I mean if somebody had to go out to their car and get something, of course they could come back in, but if you left and ran up to the Deer Park for a drink, you were at the back of the line.

Nobody left the hour before last call because they weren’t going to make last call. I don’t know how many people sat out past one o’clock and the doormen would go, “We’re really sorry. The bar’s closing,” and they would walk home. They would do it all the time and I kept on saying, “I’ve got to make this place bigger. That’s why we kept expanding.”

CAITLIN: Did you advertise?

BILL: We advertised all over the place back then and this brings up an interesting thing about right now. I can’t even imagine what it’s like now owning a bar with Facebook and Twitter and all this other free social media out there. My God, it’s crazy. We advertised on WSTW. They were just getting started; they were a lot hipper back then, so to speak. We advertised in the News Journal. We advertised in the Delaware Review. We put pictures in. Advertising cost us a fortune because every band, every new band, we sort of had to promote them and make them big.

I didn’t want it to fall into the fact that like say, for example, 1975, I didn’t want everybody coming to see the Jack of Diamonds, skip a couple weeks. See the boys, skip a couple weeks, come see them. Couldn’t do it. It had to be every week. I would put an ad in there, something like, “Okay, brought them in from Chicago. Here’s Stanley Steamer with Holly Vaughn.” I had this big picture of the beautiful Holly Vaughn. It’s the first time I ever used sex to sell an ad, but I was absolutely paying $7,000 to bring this group in from Chicago. They had to come in, they were the biggest band in Chicago.

I went out to see another band. Didn’t like the other band, walked across the street, saw Holly Vaughn and Stanley Steamer and I said I don’t care what it cost, you are going to blow my
crowd away. They do, “What? We’ve never heard of The Stone Balloon. We’re used to Chicago. We’re used to the loop. We come from 30 miles from our home and play. We’re going to need rooms; we’re going to need this. We’re going to need travel expenses.” I said, “Let’s add it all up and do it.” They turned out to be one of the biggest grossing bands ever and that’s not a local band, but they couldn’t wait to get back. They built their lives around The Stone Balloon for three years. It’s amazing.

It’s almost like they had a secondary family in Newark. That’s what Newark was about. It was the combination of: I provided the spot, the bands got better, the crowds became smarter and all of a sudden, Wonderland Records shot up. All of a sudden, all the record companies surrounded us. Record companies would be coming to town. Nobody heard of—I mean like when the Pointer Sisters came to town, the Pointer Sisters probably had sold ten albums in Newark. They were the Pointer Sisters. They were a pop disco act almost, for Christ’s sake. What are they doing in The Stone Balloon?

Then all of a sudden, I went to see them and I said, “Oh my God, these girls are a fucking blast. They’re amazing, they’re fun. Sure, they got the hits, but they’re just a fun band. They do BB King. They do this, they do that. They do everything. This is one of the most amazing concepts I’ve ever seen. I’ve got to bring them to Newark.” They fell in love with The Stone Balloon. We made it right. We provided everything they needed whether it was illegal or not. We didn’t care. I don’t mind saying it on the mic, everybody knew it. Everybody knew when they came to town—

CAITLIN: I mean it was the time.

BILL: Yeah, it was the time. That’s exactly right. I go into some of that in the book, too. I talk about—

CAITLIN: The drug use.

BILL: It was never in the bar, it was never like there, but short of like—

CAITLIN: Easily accessible.

BILL: In the ‘80s, you could talk to anybody in that bar. We all knew who they were. You can’t keep them all out. We didn’t try to keep them all out. We just said, “If you’re going to do something, go down the street to the little Deer Park, make your little deal and then come back [inaudible].”

CAITLIN: You also advertised in Fine Times, right?

BILL: Oh yeah, Fine Times did a great interview. I just read it with Bob Bowersox.

CAITLIN: Is he someone I should talk to?

BILL: Oh God, yes.
CAITLIN: Because I emailed him and he never responded.

BILL: Let me tell you, he was my coach. I went on QVC with whim.

CAITLIN: What were you on QVC for?

BILL: I don’t know if you realize this, my life is about to change drastically. I’m about to become extremely wealthy. I invented a little plant support system that’s going into Home Depot. It’s a little base—I even have one. I couldn’t even go home to get my truck because I didn’t want to be too late for you. I’m still in my truck coming back from New Jersey. I have a sprinter out there. I did a delivery to Cherry Hill for Minneapolis Corporation. I picked up a [inaudible] this morning and ran it up and ran back because [inaudible] the money.

I invented a little plant support system that’s a base. You know how you put a stake and they fall over? In a plant, if it’s softer, it falls over. I invented a base where you stick the stake down into the seven holes in the dirt.

CAITLIN: Then it holds, yeah.

BILL: It holds, it aerates the bottom of the flower pot because it sits up off the ground a little bit. It comes in three sizes, I make it right here right here in the East Coast. I don’t go to China to make it. It has 24, 36 and 48-inch stakes and it’s called The Super Stake Plant Support System. After two and a half years, I just got into Home Depot. Bob Bowersox and I went on QVC together two years ago before he left.

CAITLIN: Because he’s not there now, right?

BILL: No, he had a good, big scandal there.

CAITLIN: Oh okay. I don’t know anything about that.

BILL: Bottom line is he sold a lot of books for them, he wanted a bigger percentage. When they said no, he said goodbye. He’s doing an infomercial.

CAITLIN: Yeah, where is he now?

BILL: He’s living in Florida. I have his number. I’ll write that down, so you can remind me. Oh, I’ll write it down.

CAITLIN: Because he was also involved in the creation of Fine Times, right?

BILL: Yeah, he was Fine Times, plus he’s always been in—

CAITLIN: Was he more Fine Times than the Melton Brothers?
BILL: No, he started it and then the Melton Brothers sort of bought him out with it. It’s like all those guys were so—

CAITLIN: Was there like bad blood in between them?

BILL: No, I don’t think the Melton Brothers could hold a grudge.

CAITLIN: It’s like interesting talking to everyone because some people are like, “Don’t bring that up if you talk to that person. Don’t bring this up.” So I have to be—

BILL: Let me just tell you something beautiful about me. Everybody loved my ass and I loved everybody. I didn’t care. I’m the one that brought everybody together. That’s why it’s great talking to you and that’s why I, of course, forgot to tell you this. I’m going to want at least a life-sized statue.

CAITLIN: Oh, of course.

BILL: As you walk in the door—

CAITLIN: We’ll get you a cutout.

BILL: Yeah. I didn’t say cutout. I said statue. I’m going to have to call my lawyer about that cutout. Maybe we can downsize to a cutout. I took a picture of Eddie Murphy cutout and I and it looks so realistic. We were down in Florida one day. We were filming the movie—God, we’re talking 15 years ago. The movie where he was like the cop. Remember? It made him famous. I can’t think of the name.

CAITLIN: I know what you’re talking about. I can’t—

BILL: He and Nick Nolte were cops, the two biggest movies he—anyway, there was a cutout there. Now we never expected to see Eddie Murphy. If he wanted to have fun, he would find us. So I took this cutout and to this day, I’ve got it on my office wall and everybody goes, “Goddam, I didn’t realize you were a little taller than Eddie Murphy.” I said, “Well, he’s 6’1”, I’m 6’3”.” I mean look at it, it looks so real, so funny. My whole wall, I’ve got Bruce Springsteen, I’ve got this, I’ve got people, I’ve got this Queen picture. The only fake is Eddie Murphy and people look at that because it looks so real anyway. A cutout would be fine.

Anyway, Bob Bowersox would be very good. I have the original interview for him. I mean there’s something for the exhibit that would be great. It’s Fine Times Magazine that says, “Bob Bowersox Interviews Bill Stevenson” on the cover and it’s just something that goes back in history. This was given me on my birthday two years ago by one of my employees whose mother had it in a dresser in her house and when she passed away, they were cleaning the house. He’s looking at this thing and he said, “We threw 5,000 magazines and thank God we weren’t doing it like this, throwing them away. We were going through each one just to see what she had and
there you are.’’ He said, “It just cracked me up,” and he gave it to me for my birthday, so I have that. There’s a lot of stuff I have that would be good for the exhibit.

CAITLIN: Definitely. We’re trying to figure out what everyone still has.

BILL: Well, first of all, a picture of all these bands is somewhere. That’s like you could put a collage up, a bigger picture, several pictures. I can tell you which band—like the Jack of Diamonds deserve a big picture because they’re still around, they’re still playing and they help a lot of other people and still playing and making a lot of money.

CAITLIN: I guess now that we’ve made contact, you can kind of be my point person with it.

BILL: Well, I’d want to make the exhibit excellent.

CAITLIN: Yeah, like who to talk to because really all I’ve had to go on is looking through old issues of *Fine Times*. That’s where I’ve kind of found who was playing in this area during that time and then just by talking to people. So I mean it’s good because you were—

BILL: There’s the review and I’m not looking at this, I just—

CAITLIN: Oh yeah, if you need to go, it’s totally okay. We can continue this at a later time.

BILL: Now that I’ve talked to you, here’s my—you can shut that off for a second.

[End of Audio]
Duration: 32 minutes