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Paul J Brown, 2004

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Stax Oral Histories: Paul Brown

Interviewer: Jake

Paul Brown: Brown

Note(s): - "[?]" indicate that a word or phrase could not be transcribed or heard correctly.

- "*" indicate that the spelling of a word may not be accurate.

[0:00]

Jake: How long have you gotten with the music business?

Brown: Well, it's accident really, well it was divine or [?], I was ten years old and my mom got hooked on dermal, and because of a uterus accident this happened when I was six but you know by the time I was ten

[1:00]

she couldn't.. she couldn't she just couldn't break to have it and she [?] and ended up separating me and my three brothers and put putting us all in different schools.

Jake: Like boarding schools?

Brown: Mhm, boarding [inaudible] or foreign schools were pretty rough man cause we were you know my stepdad and all he was cool and I love him god rest his soul you know still he was from the Philippines and he really didn't have it all together you know as far as just dad hood and so when mama ODed* he kinda went out and did his thing you know, went out and kinda did his thing and we were actually me and my brothers were lent in this house for about a month before human services fou- and no [?] and they found us and that's what..

Jake: Then how'd you eat?

[2:00]

Brown: Hmm..?

Jake: How'd you eat?

Brown: There was food there, but you know, but it was dwindling down by the end of the month for sure cause I remember there wasn't much, just a lot of bread [laughter between Jake and Brown] I was ten my brothers were.. Sparky was five years older than me and he was already in a reform school called Talltree I believe my other brothers were man and they're 4, 3 and 4 years older than me.

Jake: Now this is in Memphis?

Brown: Yeah

Jake: How did you get to Memphis?

Brown: When I was a year old my mom went with me and my two real brothers we had together and had taken to the Philippines first, and

[3:00]

and we stayed there for a couple of years and by when I was five, we ended up moving here because my mom had rode us here, or in Mississippi and when we ended up moving back here and getting like in one of those low income living houses project place and that's how I came to Memphis then. Well, when I was ten, all of this happened.. the school they sent me to is in Nashville and it's called TPS and Tennessee Preparatory School, that is where, that's where I really started you know before then it is weird with me before then man I could always get I had these wooden guitars just gutted no pickups or anything I found in the dumpster and I'd have this little arm my neighbors had a microphone stand and I had the you know the toilet paper wad and I was like yeah I was like little guitars but and

[4:00]

I always was really it was real freaky with me around music and I remember that I remember how it felt It was some real connection I could never place it but there some neighbors around the block that and like a piano and I would go over there and peck on his piano and I know this guy named Louis Paul* who actually has to do with Stax or it was you know he was pretty big here in Memphis now, but back then he had an efficiency town house kind of deals and his room full of equipment man, and you couldn't pry me out of this place, and I remember how I always felt around drum sets and all that stuff, but I actually never played you know there were really locked on to it until I actually got into this school well you gotta understand that at ten years old my hair is as long as it is now, longer actually, and when I got there but the rule of the school

[5:00]

was that if you're in elementary they'll lop your hair off and that was it, and if you could see this barber man that cut my hair, I mean this was like I mean this guy he was the one I drank coffee cause he drank massive amounts of coffee and these big dark circles and his look like something out of a creature I mean he's scary he was so scary when he cut your hair

Jake: [?]

Brown: yeah and when he was and he was like he would be shaking you know and I'm just sitting there and that was I went to bed real bad too so that's was like kinda my security point at the last point and when he cut it off man then he cut it off in such a way I just looked terrible this is just all gassed up man, and I had a cowlick anyway you know and it was all sticking up, I had that man and I it was just it I was at a really humiliated point in my life at that point..

[6:00]

So in elementary school I got into a music man and I.. and that's when I you know, sat down on the piano and started kinda you know, hammered away and I fell in love with it and they had another school they and this thing called sponsors you know the guy this guy called Don Francisco who went on to win dubs* for Christian records and stuff well he ended up my big brother through that, he came to church service one Sunday and it was kinda mandatory ready to go to service so, were sitting in church and I watched and I was so blown away by his performance by his message and by his message and by his spirit and all that stuff and I had to go up and say something to him and then a couple of weeks later, he came back and started sponsoring me and he got me a guitar I started playing, actually I learned guitar before I learned piano and I started getting into that but I don't know

[7:00]

when I landed on a piano and that was kinda I knew there was something different about that and then when I went on to get into high school I started trumpet and I got into band well I actually I started playing everything I could get my hands the flute, bass.. well everything but the piano, was always stuck with me you know but the time; well there was a couple of really weird points in my life there was one point where they tried to stick me with some foster parents and that didn't really work out, they took me back here to Memphis and then the foster parents turned out to be just nuts you know, and what happened is they.. one night when we were going for pizza they took me to juvenile court and you know [?] for about 15 to 20 minutes and then you know and

[8:00]

then what actually happened is we were pulling onto the parking lot and I'm kinda getting nervous and freaked cause I always freaked out about that anyway you know.. and so they said were just gonna go in and sign some papers and this is like Friday mid-evening this is like not [?] but I sat in a room nervous and just a few minutes later this guy comes in and starts wailing on me you know, "You treat your parents like crap," this and that, you know, yeah I think I stayed there in juvenile court and detention for about forty-five days before anybody knew.. no, I take that back its longer than that, this was this was this was like almost 3 months stead before I end up getting out of that one I didn't know who or who is gonna you know if I was gonna get out or

[9:00]

anything and one day this social worker that one of the ones responsible for us going to that school in the first place was trying to find me and trying to check up on me and happened to find me down there got me out and put me back In the school at that point that was so that was so..

Jake: How old were you then?

Brown: I was thirteen then mhm yeah and it was really low point there man and um well I got back to school and the music teachers name was Mr. Pickle and he's you know he's still my hero you know and he's just a zany* guy that would come in dressed in clown suits and he was so cool because he would come in some mornings and he had put on these parliament records or these fire* records and then sit

down and go ok now this is how you could do this song on piano and it just clean blew me away I mean it was so hip like that but he was also a

[10:00]

great orchestra player I mean he could play with some serious symphonies in his time but he he knew I was really going through it at that point you know when I got back and he invit-

Jake: And at a rough age too

Brown: Yeah, it was and when he.. he somehow or the other he [?] drill man* sister to come to school and do a message but I think he had a secret motive in mind because when he after this little war* shop they gave he sent me to he sent me to the office with her to the guidance counselor you know for her to do something and boy and that and that fire ten walk I spilled my guts out after that woman and the other two or three weeks she wanted to be my big sister and sponsor me and all that stuff and she took me on Shriners tours and all that stuff you know and I

[11:00]

play trumpet and the piano and certain songs and it was just but it really helped you know it really helped plus is wouldn't have been hotel room where you had to rub the seats to [?] but well at when I got when I turned sixteen Davey had the school it was kinda you know you do okay in school you do your chores you do this and it's okay you know it was kinda there was real it, wasn't too strict as far as that goes you know I mean everybody really dug ,but at that point, everybody dug me and what I was about, but then they had developed this point system in the school where you had to do this and this and this and then the more points you got knocked off, then the more privilege you got and I was forever running laps you know just about myself just thinking deeper and they take away my

[12:00]

[?] and they just let me go the auditorium and they had this big pipe organ at the church man and the piano and they would just let me go after school or go to the school and just.. you know play and that stopped and that's when I started freaking out you know like really panicking because I was you know and so when I turned seventeen I scaled out the building the second story and came to Memphis with a trumpet and a rode ellis* and I mean I lived in every park around here and I lost my trumpet actually doing that to the trumpet the policeman gave me my first trumpet for my birthday and I lost that In the midst of all this and but that started to climb in Memphis really on a music lead professional level and it was tough man its tough its

[13:00]

tough now sometimes you know but but but really really I did I did what a lot of guys do I went different routes I tried to be in bands all original bands get record deals you know and rehearse forever a day and play once a year yeah and at that time I was still in more like night ranger kind of stuff that kind of music I was really into-

Jake: What's that?

Brown: Night ranger and foreigner different rock groups and stuff like that and then I left and I went to Arkansas to do this little cover gig for a while and came back and ringing this old buddy of mine who was tour who was road managing in Charlie Brown and he's like wow I didn't know you were back where you been what you doing and he's like and that I've never played by an artist

[14:00]

except for there was a point where let me see was the first artist I played by and kinda just locked into that now it was ill tell that was like that was '89 cause I came in I came back to Memphis from that school in '79 about ten years of just playing just trying every way I could so I went from from surely brown to Jay Blackfoot and I did that and then while I was playing with Jay Blackfoot he there was a point where we wasn't playing very much and his vandrept* was a guy guitarist named Thomas [?] was

[15:00]

the guitarist for Amp Evils* at the time and we were down and he called me man you know and what are you doing yeah and we need a keyboard player well see and had just done her I wanna say '91 or '92 and had just finished it out in one bullseye blues called fulltime love and on that album she used to have rhythm section and Thomas Van* well Charles played that gig you know and Charles was axing out on tour with him but Charles had gotten sick that's who [?] so Thomas called me and I was like yeah you know and it's so funny because I've never heard of these artists

Jake: So this was your first contact with R&B music really?

Brown: Well in that sense it really was I mean now you gotta understand before that I had a publishing deal

[16:00]

with a guy in Memphis his name is Niko Lyras and he has a studio called Cotton Row and he's a great player and he's done so much man and he's but at that point a lot of the guys that were that were doing sessions and that I was doing sessions with like the bass player had played with a bar case forever after James Alexander this guy named Dwight Thomas Steve Potts was playing with the Booger TNMGS* and with [?] and everybody now but these guys who I cut my rnbt* on before I even hooked on Shirley so by the time I hooked up with her I got a really had a grasp on..

Jake: On the feel..

Brown: On the feel and I mean a lot of hours man, cause me and Steve and Dwayne we'd be up I lived on top on the studio man and they would come up after sessions and all that stuff we'd just sit and play and play and

[17:00]

then I joined a band called the Coolers and the Coolers was were actually Bobby Manuel who was the Stax musician here yeah and Steve Potts and Dwayne Thomas or Dave Smith just that whole circle of people you know so yeah so anyway going back to I took the gig and it's so weird man because Shirley and Jay Blackfoot that instant that I um (interruption caused by noise)

Jake: Just wait for this to finish

Brown: That's so funny, it's panicked

Jake: [?] his sick granddaughter was there the whole time sort of making pictures and sort of periodically yelling things at him and whispering things at him

Brown: Really?

Jake: Yeah it was spell things it was kind of enduring

Brown: That's gre-

Jake: I actually thought it would actually character in the end

Brown: I know it did!

Jake: You know you gotta get you a little reality in there

[18:00]

Brown: I sure love learning [?] he's my brother

Jake: He's a real good guy

Brown: He masters everything I do

Jake: Is that right?

Brown: Yeah, everything I do I mean he is my he

Jake: He's the best right?

Brown: He is he really is I mean he's great at what he I mean he is incredible at what he does a history of what he's done and just the fact that he's such a kind individual

Jake: What a sweetheart! I couldn't believe how [?]

Brown: So anyway it's weird because the connection I've always had with these people these artists you know I mean Shirley you know and I mean it's so funny because even to this day Shirley is my sister and I'll do dates with her or you know Jay Blackfoot I mean it's like I'm never actually just finalized without playing with them it's just you know I just on other sayings you know but with Ann now it was Ann way different, Ann.. there was a different a whole different connection

[19:00]

with Ann we felt that the first note that we like I play with her on stage you know I was just a hired sub keyboard player man we looked over each other and we knew something was different you know and next thing you know we were writing together and then the next thing you know me and her husband and Don Brian we were all three with his family we were just like I mean we had this big roundtable they had from the 70s' the roundtable and we were all coffee junkies and we sit there and wed write brainstorm on this and it's just growing and now they're my absolute best friends in the world you know and we are a team all three of us are an inseparable team and right now were cutting like crazy now you know and but that's the deal so one time I hooked up with Ann and it

[20:00]

spawned a lot of other gigs too like there's Pott's gigs too like three days for George Clinton cause he saw me in Amsterdam playing the Paradiso

Jake: With [?] people

Brown: Mhm yep then the barcays and ooh man maybe staples just a lot a lot of a big list of different people that I just play with you know just got a chance to play with and record with you know cause [?] came down and recorded on two songs on the last record I did with ann.

Jake: Huh.. what the work like with [?]

Brown: It was so unbelievably cool I mean they you couldn't stop them from singing you know I mean you just couldn't stop I mean when you sat down

Jake: You gotta hit the tape immediately it's not gonna stop

Brown: Yeah and she'll sing till she gets hoarse like she can't sing it.. she's great man and but it's been a struggle man it's been a struggle for me..

[21:00]

just you know kinda reflecting back I've been so blessed to do so many different kinds of music you know I mean like right now man I'm into so many kinds of different kinds of music and I love selling different kinds of music and I'm just so blessed right now I'm at a point in my life where I'm at interluxury and do that and not just totally sink under doing it but it's just been a tough road because getting there you I'm divorced and I got two kids twins who are seventeen or fixing to turn seventeen as you like but trying to get the balance on being a good dad you know and there's a point.. there's a point for any kid being a musician man if this interview does anybody any great ditto just if I got offered any one thing is for a

[22:00]

kid, it's outside of really staying in school because man I got my god in jail you know and I didn't..I didn't... the problem with me is I didn't realize how..how I could learn you know because nobody ever taught me really how to learn you know and till when I got my GED all of a sudden I was like wow I'm not that dumb cause I got my god it was flying colors but if somebody would've been there in my younger days to kind of really kind of like a paring person you know that I could gotten further in school you know but as far as the kid goes just to give yourself time to learn before you start seriously committing yourself or you know having.. going out and having unsafe sex or having kids all over the place you know because it takes

[23:00]

you out you know it's hard to stay in the game at that point and be effective you can't and it's hard when your young and that's the deal, with me in my early twenties man I'm you know I'm just trying to get ahead I'm trying to make it and trying to do trying to make music my career and then doing that I'm doing construction hanging sheet rock and you know everything's like that kinda pulling all the energy and then trying to be a good dad and I'm constantly getting frustrated and there was a point where I turned a 360 degree and went straight you know I got spirited and I went in that direction for a long time and my kids suffered from it because there was about five or six years that are you know dads not here very much at all because dads on the road and you know and at this point now I finally getting the handle back on and getting my balance

[24:00]

but man it's been really tough road, you know, to try to get that balance and try to be comfortable playing you know doing what you love to do so that's where I am at now it's just I'm cutting records and I love to cut everything that I'm cutting now I try to cut and I try to make it a really vial piece of history like I don't cut demos I do not cut demos and anything I cut well see where [?] in Amp Evil's* house so history there anyways every time the tapes on I mean every time but for me it's even more it's so much more special than just that I mean so everything that I do I try to make it as awesome as I can make it you know and something that's gonna go down in history something.. something really respectable and so that's kind of where I'm at now

[25:00]

It's just trying to really keep balance being a good dad I'm not pressuring to be a good musician or any of that I just want them to do what they love to do and just keep it balanced but still working like crazy in the studio.. It's funny cause I did.. work with Bobby Rush, did his last record..

Jake: I heard that actually

Brown: Did you really?! Yeah it was a lot of fun man, it was a lot of fun I did the live DVD with him in Morgan Freeman's place and that caused a lot of history I mean stuff like that I mean that was kind of the things just happened so ironically, because bobby had gotten that bus accident, I don't know if you knew about it but Bobby got in a really bad bus accident and it was fatal for one of his dancers and it

injured really bad him and his keyboard player and some other musicians but his keyboard player was still in therapy you know

[26:00]

trying to recover when bobby called me and asked me if I do some days with him and I did and we click and we click right off the bat and then we were at his house one day in Jackson Mississippi and we were kind of noodling around some ideas and stuff and I started sequencing because I'm real big into sequencing stuff you know and this has like I didn't know you could do that you know and I'm like yeah so next thing you know I'm doing all the tracks on his record and I'm like wow you know this is just unbelievable that it turned out this way and then being on the DVD and it's just such an incredible journey with him because the more I got to know bobby the more I was like wow there's so much more to this guy if were being always try to stay away from quote from [?] records because I really didn't care much about-

Jake: What does that mean the [?] records?

Brown: Well it's where you substitute real

[27:00]

[?] for fakes ones and you don't even use good sounds

Jake: You probably got on to synthesize

Brown: Yeah it was real cheesy was every comedic everything you know it's about the comedy in the record it's not about the voice or the music the music is..

Jake: 80s' blues like you know

Brown: Yeah and I just always [?] cause I had a bunch of them trying to hit up to do records you know and I just strayed away from them I mean at that point that was just a few years ago and at that point I've been working with nothing but live horns you know, the Memphis horns I mean.. like all these you know man so I'm like I ain't wanna go there, but I don't know there was something different about Bobby plus I was able to cut some corners on there to where you know it wasn't so cheesy you know, it was kinda taking it in a different direction then I'm telling it was so much fun you know

[28:00]

and Bobby and I just grew up to be brothers and it's just one those things man it's like anybody I meet along the way like that all the artists man we always have these kinda lifelong connections and I'm just thankful for that cause I meet so many people that just don't get this opportunity so you know so many people.. so many people man that try so hard to do things they're all you know some people miss by one shot you know trying to get deals and all that stuff and it's just man.. I'd say too man playing behind the artist is so, it gives you such an advantage you make money while you get chops together or while you're doing whatever.

Jake: Something about playing with a really spectacular artist and band leader and composer where it's all of a sudden you start learning to play in a whole new way..

Brown: Yeah

Jake: You know because if they have a specific idea

[29:00]

of the way they you know they want you to play, then all of a sudden and you have to learn something new and really send yourself

Brown: You do!

Jake: You know was that sort of how it was with you and Shirley Brown?

Brown: With Shirley brown I mean yeah it was for two different reasons actually where Shirley.. Shirley is real big on gospel I mean I'm talking about real gospel them big fat changes you know, and see the guy tha-

Jake: [?] the big fat change

Brown: Yeah this big sharp night course man and you know there's I mean yeah.. Yeah and even though her stuff like on the Stax like wasn't very complicated the stuff that she kinda got into so she cut [?] into me and she had Winston Stewart from the original keyboard player from the barcays* is an incredible gospel player well that's who I took his place I took on this gig.

Jake: What was it like trying to get that feel you know there's

[30:00]

such a feel to honor of being in gospel you know it comes from such a deeply rooted tradition you know what was it like to working to find that feel you know how did you go about that.

Brown: You know what for me Jake it's always been about the feel.

Jake: Always, yeah

Brown: it's always been about the feel I mean and that's why it was so easy for me to just lock in into the more straight funk R&B stuff because before I was anything I was about the feel, I mean it's just something inside me so that by the time I locked in with Shirley I mean on the first gig I played with Shirley even though I was in nervous wreck of some of this stuff cause there were some pretty heavy changes you know still when it came to plan, just the feel part of it man, it's just like it's already in my heart.

Jake: And it's about having a physical relationship with an instrument actually..

Brown: It is, it really is!

Jake: I think that's what so separates a lot of

[31:00]

I think what makes the stax sound and the high sound so special is that these musicians they have a physical [?] relationship with the music itself it was tangible.

Brown: Right, now see with Ann it grew worse and with Shirley it was kinda like ok you know and but with Ann it was so different because the hype thing of course it's more of a lay back

Jake: It's cool

Brown: Just lazy just you know yeah raw and dirty you know.

Jake: It's so tight though, so cool but, so tight

Brown: So tight.. and just the way everything was laying back and the way Ann sang she's just got a really laid back but tight in the pocket vibe when she sings so what we would do you know is like I had said just kinda grew into that and it became such a part of everything I do

[32:00]

I mean it doesn't matter what I'm cutting man I mean I cut this rock record when a group called the [?] station you know and it was full on rock like humble rock kind of thing and they just came in and by that time now this was '95 and our [?] 3 or 4 years and they just got me to do just what you do you know and just and by that time I kinda had me a vibe going you know an Ann thing all in me they had you know and it is, it is a physical relationship man that I have always had with my instrument I mean I can remember the first concert I ever played man I was fourteen years old and I can remember just laying into it like there was no tomorrow its funny cause my kids got a sub my kids got this friend a good guitar player he was sixteen and he came by one night

[33:00]

and he was playing and I was playing with a [?] called free world and there's another great band in Memphis you know and then you gotta come by sometime and it's a class man it's a great bunch of musicians but they he came in and set in and I just saw him and you know he is one of those kids he's just palying and he hasn't shared a few shops you know but its just he wouldn't feeling it you know it was just like he was just like and I'm like what are you doing up here you know like and was asking me for a vice and I'm like man there are like one million guitar players out there man you better get something going on between you and that instrument something that's gonna you know you better get you a relationship happening.

Jake: You gotta start sleeping with it

Brown: Yeah but that's me you know I've always had that I've always had that passion about everything I do because its weird Jake its weird with me man because before 95' man

[34:00]

I had never fathomed being behind a console mixing a record like not even in the [?] you know I mean I just consider myself a keyboard player and a song writer more so even a keyboard player although I love writing songs.. then all of a sudden man next thing you know after Ann's record I found myself kinda by necessity getting off into the engineering thing you know and it's so amazing man because just thinking about you know Bobby Rush did when he does a record he normally has five or six different people working on it in different places you know and just to engineer and produce and mix a record by myself is just clean blows me away and the fact that I listen to it and I like it you know and its ok this is ok..

Jake: It's a dangerous moment just putting it on there

[35:00]

Brown: Yeah and I just go but it's just.. and then last year I got pushed into going more virtual you know I went from real to reals to 8 [?] you know and same thing with consoles to how just you know full blown computer

Jake: What do like better, the analog or the pro tools?

Brown: Well, I don't use pro tools I use anther program called Nuendo which is to me I love better than pro tools I mean I could've went both but I got a guy one of my partners Tim Loffland* who works who does FedEx's corporate computer stuff and he built me a serious monster key- uh computer, and for me Jake I just think man it's all about what you feel and how you treat what your putting on tape I mean you know I've heard guys that you know that goes to do digital stuff and it sounds so digital man and I've heard stuff I've heard guys who had you know I mean analog things you would just die to have you know and it sounds terrible you know and man you know when I'm doing it sounds cool it sounds.. it doesn't sound all digital you know I mean the last thing I just got through doing I used skip [?] from the shaft and Ann and it's a jazz thing is they're playing it like crazy on the jazz station now and but it's just like when I listen back to it [?] it doesn't sound like I did it on a computer a matter of fact, it sounds like a band and they're just playing you know and I just cut a song on Ann first song since her record in 96' and same thing it's so warm and so you know for me I love the versatility man I mean I tell you what man I've done records so..

[37:00]

I've done records just so crazy you know I mean there's just the things I've done on the fly to get to do things I've wanted to do to do any things I would you know had old rack samplers and stuff I wanna fly things in or do different just sound [?] of kids in the background or different things like that when you only got 16 to 24 tracks and that is it I mean in an analog console no automation man you're funny and then for me I like flying enterprise you know so when I got to this it really it just to me it just.. it just allowed me to all the stuff that I'm hearing in my head to do it and do it more comfortably but as far as the difference for me the difference of that the analog that's on tape man I'm telling you I love this you

know I mean I love when I'm getting on this and I think from a nostalgic standpoint you know or from a vibe standpoint yeah

[38:00]

it goes really [?] and cut there and yeah you're going to get some vibes you know and the devil yeah..

Jake: But did you [?] with Ann

Brown: My [?] with Ann but.. but I've you know of course been over there and I just you know I mean you could just step in there and you can just..

Jake: Same thing when you walk through studio A and here even though it's rebuilt

Brown: And then you just get the vibe yeah and that's the thing you know, but as far as from a technical sound standpoint man, I love where I'm at, plus it's the tracks, you know, so many more tracks how you do background you don't have to worry where you're gonna put it man, you can cut so much more stuff and stereo and then deal with the panning of it and plus, I'm starting to work in 5.1 now, so yeah so I'm able to blast in it but, what I had to do is I had to stand for about.. for 3 months before I ever even turned the machine on and just cracked through the manuals,

[39:00]

not correct but.. but no really though before I even turned the machine on I spent about that much time going through the manuals and really making myself you know learn, and then by when I cut that machine on man it was a lot of it just you know I could work pretty fast on it.

Jake: Now what about the hottest brothers [?] playing with them that was all with Amp Evils or do you have a separate you know do you work with them separately?

Brown: No that was all with an, that was all with Ann.. we did it too with Ann in 97' where I used Leroy came out us and Howard grimes came out with us for the whole tour and it was awesome

Jake: That's great

Brown: Then we cut there was a tribute to Eric Clapton a record came out where Ann did Tears in Heaven, now this is you there [?] is to cut five or six different my personal ultimate milestones in my career and that was one of them because we cutted

[40:00]

[?] into the same room that the zeppelin record was cut in.

Jake: Which one, which set from the [?] was cutted..

Brown: Cat or cashmere..

Jake: Physical graffiti?

Brown: Physical [?] album was cut and so we were in there and Howard Grimes, Leroy Hodges, Michael Toles, Charles Hodges, was on b3 and I was on Rhodes and see before all the high records, with them Archie Turner was always the piano player for that or Fred and just the fact that I was in that mix being on a record and its documented and it's there for all time and it ain't going nowhere you know, that being on a record was Rufus Thomas you know..

Jake: What was that like?

Brown: That is it was awesome because it was the guys like Bobby Manuel,

[41:00]

Steve Potts, Dwayne Thomas, I mean doing sessions with those guys is just so much fun they don't for me they don't even feel like sessions it was just it was like a spiritual thing happening you know

Jake: What was Rufus like to work with

Brown: God, Rufus is awesome Rufus is just a maniac any day we did Olympics, the 97' Olympics [?] with him, and although I gotta tell you that Rufus wasn't there.. Rufus was not there when we actually cut the rhythm [?] tracks on it, I think we put them on, as a matter of fact, if I'm thinking right, it's so funny, if I'm thinking right, that record that.. that record wasn't even going to be a Rufus Thomas record to begin with. We cut about seventeen songs that were going to be sound [?] for different things and I think what happens after they cut it they put out this sound

[42:00]

Bobby Manuel had this idea of putting the [?] album, and he used that track and got Rufus to sing it and I wrote some lyrics to it

Jake: That's great

Brown: But play alive with him is awesome

Jake: What's that like?

Brown: It's just like Ann, it's a spiritual something every time.

Jake: you really have to watch him closely cause he's gonna you know, he's sort of, he really commands everything..

Brown: He does.. he does but see that's the same thing with Bobby Rush man, you know, Bobby Rush, it's so weird because when I'm with Ann I was the band director I mean you know and but with Bobby Rush I totally loved not being that too, I totally loved watching the guy just like you know..

Jake: Taking the lead for them.

Brown: Yeah.. yeah

Jake: Rufus still had a lot of energy at that point

Brown: He did.. he did

Jake: How old was he at that point when you were playing at 96'

Brown: yeah uh huh and 97' was 97 was when..

[43:00]

but now I [?] now I tell you it was 90 no... it was; I did a gig with him in 2001 too, I wanna say 200 or 2001 it was about before a year before.. and yeah it wasn't long and even then he was just.. it's insane I mean before he went on stage and[?] was a different thing we did [?] together that's another.. we did paretta* in 90'.. 99' I think let's say 99' it's now the year 99' and he'd just man.. he'd be [?] you know the stage was completely lighted up.

Jake: There's people who have this relationship with a stage and for their whole life you know it's like no matter how sick they are as soon as they hit, all of a sudden, there's a chemical thing that happens you know in relationship that happens you know I think Solomon Burke is like that they wheel him on stage in a wheelchair, when I went to go see him, and then the second

[44:00]

he opened his mouth all of a sudden it was like *pheeew* you know, 50 years younger and he was right out there..

Brown: See that's why the guy who produces last records, yeah henry and I are working together

Jake: Oh yeah?

Brown: Mhm

Jake: Well they'll produce the last song on the record.

Brown: And its why how connection like that are made through all this you know and it's just weird how many people and how many things I've done, but you know what, Jake, man when I came to Memphis I vowed man, that I wasn't going to drink or smoke weed or.. drugs, you know I just I've always had one advantage I've always think I've always given myself I've always stayed completely focused you know I mean he had no directions changed and I go through changed or I'm linked through changes

Jake: You just have to be focused

Brown: Yeah still man just being able to do it with a clear mind man and I see so many guys who don't

[45:00]

and wonder why they're not where they wanna be you know because they don't put that kind of energy that kind of conviction to it and for me that's the only way, that's the only way it's so many.. I mean you

think about it now I mean how many people are out there trying to scuffle and make it you know, and everybody wants to make it out of here you know and you have to have so much conviction in what you're doing you know, purpose too, but you gotta have that conviction and you can't just.. be getting toasted and think you're gonna.. nothing's gonna happen, I mean, it's just.. I know v-.. man I don't.. I don't know anybody really, you know, nowadays that can pull that off, I mean they'll get out in a minute you know I've seen so many guys even in Memphis that sluffing around Memphis because you know..

[46:00]

just drinking their own [?] you know, but, doing coke or crack or whatever you know, and I'm just like man I ain't going out like that, if I don't make it as [?] as anyone can be because I didn't put my both feet and my mind as forward as I could.

Jake: I see that you've made it pretty far in this business Paul.

Brown: I feel good you know, I feel good like, I feel like if right now, if I kick the bucket man, I have a lot, I have a lot, I have a lot to leave behind you know, and I've got two outfits in here *laughter*.. no but really though, I mean you know, I mean what I wanna do is there was some plateaus I wanna reach between what I'm doing and my kids and I still have yet to do, and we still can't go on camping trips as much as I'd like too, you know,

[47:00]

we can't do things that you know that it's.. there's still things I want wanna get but the only I'd be able to is to get to another plateau of music, you know I'm close to being there hut it's still you know it's just.. to be able to that and do this and do both equally you know, and there's a level man that I'm still aiming for that I'm kinda on the threshold of , but I do man, when I think about things that I've gotten to do over, you know, over the last, over the last 15-20 years the things I've gotten to do man, and the different kinds of music, like the whole year of 99' I toured with the rock groups survivor

Jake: I don't know them

Brown: I had a tiger they did that..

Jake: Oh yeah?

Brown: yeah rocking movies 80's rock, 80's rock here I am.. [?] Amp Evils gig,

[48:00]

doing the survivor gig, and I'm just going , but you know most people, not, you know, think that's a down but man I mean I was like to me that was a notch into the diversity chain, you know, like yeah man, but uh, yeah man I'm still, you know, hey I'm still struggling and striving to be the best dad that I can be, and get my kids their school and make them know that how supporting school is, the things that I didn't know, the things that I didn't have, and really just trying to make music that not only matters,

but really, is.. go down it's a really good part of history you know, but that's what I strive for man, and be a good Christian.. *Laughter*

Jake: Thanks a lot Paul!

[49:00]

Brown: Thank you so much Jake! Yeah you're cool..

[End of interview-49:03]