



A BAND OF A PAST TIME

By Bella Pires

The deep red, murky green, and brown ripples of grunge emerged in the late '80s. Mudhoney, Malfunkshun, U-Men, and Skin Yard were the early establishers of the sound. While lesser known, they laid the groundwork for the rogue wave that was swept up by Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains, and Nirvana.

Around the same time, Chapel Hill's indie rock scene emerged. Characterized by a do-it-yourself ethic in recording and publishing music and organizing events, the movement fit the same counterculture formula of the Pacific Northwest with bands like Superchunk and Polvo. The genre had invaded local college radio stations with its cousin from across the nation.

In 1987, Martin Godwin arrived on the scene. Music-wise, it was a lot to take in as an incoming freshman at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Grunge was starting to swell, and Chapel Hill was saturated with student bands looking to distinguish themselves.

In the thick of clouded smoke, empty shot glasses, and blaring sound at the Cave on West Franklin, Knocked Down Smilin' was just one of many aiming for something.

WHERE DID IT START?

“We didn't look down on success, which some of the indie bands are like, you know, don't be a sellout,” Godwin said. “I wouldn't say we were trying to be a sellout, but we certainly would have loved to have been considered mainstream.”

Godwin grew up surrounded by music; it was always in his ears, in his hands, and feet. At 13, Godwin took up guitar lessons. It was short-lived, but he had the basics down to get better on his own. Mason Pitts lived the same way. His brothers were musicians, both drummers, who would frequently take him to concerts to open his mind to the world. He studied string bass in high school, too. And into college, he continued studying and practicing the bass.

By the time Godwin angled his surfboard, there were murmurs of Chapel Hill becoming the next Seattle – the rippling black, purple tones, muted blues, and green waves of indie rock were taking over. Charles Jones, the producer and sound engineer of Knocked Down Smilin's discography, said that in retrospect, the scene wasn't complex, but it was dark and heavy – a grandchild of punk and the forefather of 2000s emo. Chapel Hill bands took on a moody and somber tone paired with loud and abrasive instrumentals.

“It's indie rock, with a real dark, drony sound. It's almost punkish,” he said. “I guess you'd call it shoegazer.”

Godwin's brief music career began with a two-man acoustic cover stint with friend Matt Jones on the checkered floors and polished wooden chairs at Four Corners: soft strumming and a shy voice mixing in with the tinkling of glasses and scraping silverware on worn plates. Greek life was also supportive of his endeavors. Some nights, he'd collide with the buzz of conversation and solo cups, and others, he'd be back at Four Corners, surrounded by chicken wings and shot glasses.

Nothing miraculous happened. It just hit him, “I want to start a band with really good players,” Godwin thought. So, other people were brought in. He already knew Bogie Bowles, a drummer with heavy metal and John Bonham on the brain. He also knew Pitts, a brother of Beta Theta Pi who could play bass. Matt was eventually phased out; music was more of a hobby rather than a life to pursue.

Sets started with covers, but then one or two original songs were sprinkled in to test the waters. Yet, the group didn't quite feel like a band; another guitarist was needed. Pitts recommended

Samuel Cloyd, whom he knew from high school. Luckily for the group, he was willing to transfer to somewhere close by, albeit 45 minutes away, in Raleigh.

Godwin wanted to take up surfing, the waves of grunge or indie rock. Covers or original. He had to decide.

“Am I going to be fully, you know, original, or am I going to do this kind of, you know, original and cover thing?” he said. “And so, from day one with Knocked Down, it was always original.”

In 1991, Knocked Down Smilin’ was born.

Godwin on vocals and rhythm guitar, Pitts on bass, Bowles on the drums, and occasionally helping with lyrics, and finally Cloyd, the lead guitarist.

THE INSPIRATION

Before the titular band name, they were called Meatwagon; this wouldn’t last long, as it only served as a substitute until they could think of something better. While sipping beers and twiddling thumbs, Godwin and Pitts were writing down band names on napkins. As the crumpled pile of white began to stack up, an ‘Eureka!’ occurred. They’d pitched it to Bowles and Cloyd, showcasing the napkin as proof, and with nothing else thought up, Knocked Down Smilin’ stuck.

Godwin said that Knocked Down Smilin’ was an outlier in the alternative rock scene at Chapel Hill. Their inspirations were clear from the get-go. They had a vision of being a true, smashing-records-and-cultural-sweep, rock band.

They were all starstruck by the heavy poeticism of Led Zeppelin. Growing up in the south, the melodies of folk and blues from the Allman Brothers and country, with loud, brash guitar riffs and solos of Lynyrd Skynyrd, had little in common with the dynamism of Led Zeppelin’s metal, psychedelic, and blues core. When entering college, it was all about the Red-Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, and Alice in Chains.

As a guitarist, Godwin was attracted to the playing styles of Stevie Ray Vaughn, Jimi Hendrix, and even the funk and reggae influences of James Brown and Bob Marley.

“I felt like Robert Plant was the best singer of all the great rock frontmen,” he said. “The thing that really made it for me was their drummer, John Bonham.”

Bonham was the legendary drummer of Led Zeppelin. While he hammered down on the snare and toms, he was able to capture attention by filling in at the right place at the right time; he applied the grooves of jazz drumming to rock. His addition to the musicality of the band was hard to replace, so much so that Led Zeppelin disbanded after he died in 1980.

In terms of vocal inspirations, Greg Allman was more attainable than Plant. He sounded similar to Godwin's preferred blues singers, like Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, and Aretha Franklin; rich and deep.

"I can feel what they're singing about," he said. "Those folks, like when I would hear them, those are the people that gave me goosebumps." Contemporary-wise, Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam was good too.

Pitts was into jazz-fusion bassists like Jaco Pastorius and Stanley Clark. Or John Entwistle, of The Who, with his "typewriter" approach to playing, and funk bassist Louis Johnson, who utilized a percussive sound to his notes. Bowles, on the other hand, was a metalhead; Black Sabbath and Judas Priest hardened and weighed down his skull.

Coupled with the individual inspirations of each member, Knocked Down Smilin' was chasing a riff-driven track and harmony style of sound, like rock and punk, but not so cliché. Sam wouldn't allow it.

"[Sam] was listening to all sorts of bands with weird time signatures, different chord structures," Godwin said. "So, he was probably a big influence in and what we would say is, you know, if we can do it this way, and there's a weird way to do it, let's try the weird way, right? And so, he was real good at that, kind of pushing us to try different things."

Cloyd came from a shreddy type of rock – ugly, edgy, and intense; underground, a garage sound with a funky twist. He often brought in new, never-before-heard records that really caught Jones and the other band members off guard; he was taken aback by the Red-Hot Chili Peppers and Tool. It brought him back to the times of King Crimson, Pink Floyd, and the grandiose prog rock era of the 1960s and '70s.

"That clicked with me right away," Jones said. "So it was, it was cool as the first time somebody had played me new music that I was really wowed by in a long time."

The band had a diverse line-up and was a bit of an anomaly sound-wise among the pop ensembles, and the weirdness of the Squirrel Nut Zippers and Superchunk. Like every other college band, they looked to define themselves in some way and make something that'd never

been heard before. So, they picked a niche – play heavy. But Knocked Down Smilin’ had a different approach in developing a “heavy” sound.

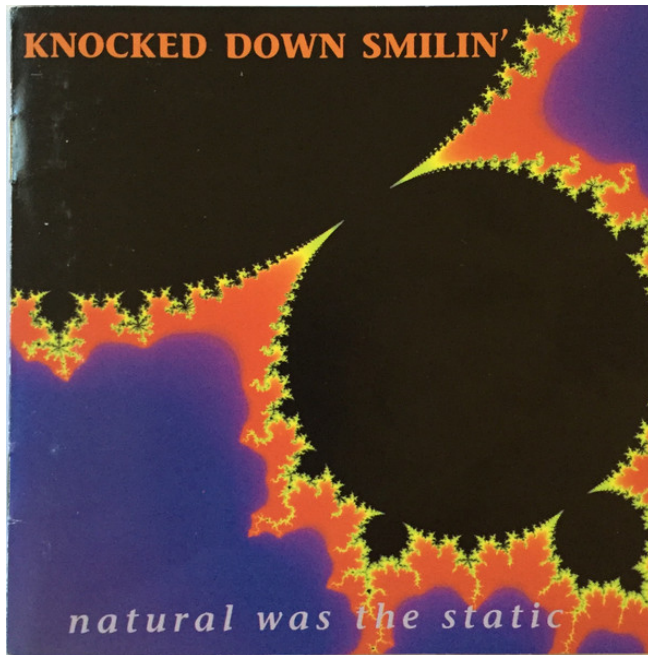
MAKING MUSIC

“Natural was the Static” was the band’s first album and only album that can be listened to publicly. Released in 1994, the record was released under Dr. Lime Records, a now-defunct label headed by Jones, that also worked with Flyin’ Mice in 1991, another Chapel Hill-based music group with little to no documented existence of its time. Godwin knew him previously from his two-man lineup days; they had worked together. Jones was surprised by how Knocked Down Smilin’ stood out already; since their inception, they’d hardly played any covers – it was original material day one, and the material was strong.

The album has a total of 11 songs and a runtime of 45 minutes and 15 seconds. It’s a gem in an era of perfectly mixed music. The name was coined by novelist and literary critic John Updike; it reads “Human was the music, natural was the static.” As Godwin was penning lyrics to the sheet of faded notebook paper, the scrawling of letters and messy sentences turned into an homage to his younger brother, who had moved away to Louisiana – they hadn’t seen each other in a long time.

“I guess that was my therapy, right?” he said. “Just talking about the kind of loss of that relationship, or the concern I had for my little brother, or whatever that comes through when I read the lyrics”. But, besides Godwin, every member was chipping in lyrics.

Jones can’t remember who appointed the title, but he interprets it as a mindset, that of someone whose thoughts ping around, rotating endlessly - “going down a lot of rabbit holes” as he said, a stark contrast to the literal idea of “natural static.” The equal audible frequency of white noise; nothingness with a little bit of spark in it.



The cover of the album follows the same idea. It contains three fractals – never-ending patterns that continually repeat themselves at different scales. The large, deep black circles are like suns, and the angular sparks coming out of them, enwrapped by yellow and red, are music.

“I kind of take that quote to mean that we start with a basis of noise, and out of noise comes order and organization, and out of order and organization comes music, and that people will always take chaos and shape it into music. And that's the beauty of what musicians do,” Jones said. “And it's like,

you're not going to contain that, that chaos, noise, in one finite container, the people humans, are going to make it burst out in new and unexpected ways.”

To make the album, it was easy. Just play; strike the drum, pluck the bass, slide the pick across the neck. The muffled thumps and melodies shook up the lush forestry and swaying grass on Castle Rock Farm Road as the pink and yellow hues of evening turned into a pitch-black sky. The team would just play the music, play and play until someone would say “I like that,” followed by “I liked that too. We should do it again”, then “what can we put with that?”

The team would try picking at it in different directions, especially Mason and Sam.

“Those two together could think of things differently,” Godwin said. “I’m not wired that way. I’m a blues-based melodic guy.”

Experimentation was key. Sometimes, he would attempt the guttural depth of Eddie Vedder or try and sing through his nose and end words with a twang resembling Layne Staley; occasionally, he’ll sing softer, even adding a little bit of la-da-lee-da-da-da and zippity-ba-ba to pander to his lifelong love of blues singers and jazz. While Cloyd brought color and edge, Pitts supported the groove. Along those lines, he worked with Bowles to create an effective rhythm – to create the soulful persistence of blues singing through instrumentals.

Their sound was heavily based around the riff – the hook, which the lead guitarist, Cloyd, always set. Because of that, the “heavy” factor of what he was inspired by tended to bleed through and could be easily identified. So much so that their style was dubbed “Southern Fried Seattle” or a “poor man’s version” by magazines.

“We weren't really, maybe we should have been more clever about it, but we were never really intentionally trying to copy one thing or another,” Pitts said.

natural was the static

The tracks of “Natural Was the Static” were less than consistent sound-wise. For the most part, it was completely off-kilter compared to everything else that Jones had worked on. It was harder, more edgy, and driven, and people responded to it. The “Southern Fried Seattle” bit, while a funny term, highlighted the band’s distinctive sound and style techniques from the rest of the indie rock surf. Knocked Down Smilin’ was riding the grunge wave, a foot in the waters of Seattle and another in swampy southern rock.

It was mostly done in Jones’s basement studio, on Castle Rock Farm Road. The CD was recorded on a quarter-inch tape, which meant that once it was inscribed, any mistake meant a do-over. Additionally, cutting out the unwanted parts was a chore in itself – precisely cutting out the part, then re-recording on a separate tape to glue between the halves of the original take. So, members had to know their parts individually and anticipate how the team would play as a whole; they had to be tied together. Even friend Matt Jones returned as backup vocals.

Charles tried to get the band to stretch themselves out, go a little further, and take a left turn. The album is all over the place, but at its core, it exhibits that Southern Fried Seattle charm. “Hide,” the fifth song, takes on a slow, dirty, and heavy drumbeat; an industrial rock sizzle that takes after Nine Inch Nails. “More Things Change,” the ninth song, has a more spacey chorus, but ties back to the industrial feel with distorted guitars and synthesizers.

“I feel like we tried to do something on those. I don't know that we got all the way there. Always felt like there was something missing that we couldn't figure out,” he said. “But the rest of the album, I feel like that album is really strong.”

While their work didn’t mimic the sound of Jones’ prog rock, groove, and psychedelic ‘60s roots, the exploratory quality of the album emulated those feelings; they brought him back to an earlier time that he could envision: Anton Ego with his fork in hand, scooping into the porcelain plate of red, yellow, and green.

Before the band tried to push any boundaries, they already had a quirky combo of Southern soul mixed with funk and dark rock rinsed out by Seattle grunge. What made Jones even more attracted to them was their ability to keep people interested in listening to complex musical arrangements by dropping back into funky, full-body grooves; the ears of both average listeners and music nerds were perked up.

“One thing I've always struggled with as a listener and as a producer is bands that get so heady in their capabilities as super-skilled musicians that they write music which, yeah, it's amazing, but it leaves the listener behind because it's so hard to follow,” he said. It's very academic. It's like, yeah, listen to how cool, a difficult thing I can play.”

It was a highly cooperative, proactive process in making “Natural Was the Static.” Each party was fully committed, microscopes readied, and eyes off the clock. It took weeks of starting something out, then returning to it later with a different feel. Weeks turned into months of them sifting through the ideas on the table until, gradually, the stack dwindled into a cohesive puzzle - playing around with a harmony, fixing chords, developing a hook, all these pieces paired together created an arrangement that didn't quite fit the pocket of the grunge wave; it transformed into something that catered to each member's individual influences: Southern Fried Seattle – waters of mustard yellow, blue, dark red, and brown.

Jones said that Godwin did not try to write an amazing narrative with visionary lyrical prose to knock critics off their feet, but he did create an ambiguous, imaginative story that anyone could latch on to; the glasses could fit whoever put them on. But he interpreted the main subject as someone who's a bit off kilter – an unrecognizable world. However, every person walks about the earth with a different angle that can seem strange to another.

Largely, “Natural Was the Static” was meant to emulate a “science-y slash industrial” theme. To Jones, the music reminded him of the scaling fractals – the way that they were able to work out a riff until it broke down, sweating into pieces, then working those pieces into their own separate grooves, and finally pairing it all back together: a fractal, or at least, fractal-ish.

They surfed along, rained down by the elements of what they liked: heavy metal, funk, folk rock, classic rock, and the black, earthy grunge tidal wave.

“I think we were trying to, definitely trying to find ourselves on some level, and maybe in some cases, when it came down to the right or recording and kind of fine-tuning things,” Pitts said. “I'm thinking a few instances, probably even overthinking it too much.”

Sub Pop, the independent Seattle record label that signed on Nirvana and Mudhoney, was a role model for Jones and his small record label. The end goal was to sell Knocked Down Smilin's contract to a major label and receive a buyout. So, on the record, they had all agreed to dish out a variety of sounds to demonstrate their individual abilities and reach out beyond the crowd of people towards the upper row of major record labels.

PROMOTING

To get people to pay attention to their debut, everyone had to do their homework.

Pitts radio-tracked for Sony Music Entertainment, which meant that he tracked the artists of record labels on college and commercial radio stations. Every week, he compiled lists of musicians that the labels wanted to push and gave concert tickets to music and program directors to get them out and see the incoming star potential. Sometimes, Mason got to see these concerts himself.

Godwin's job was bridging the gap between the band and venues and newspapers. He reached out to music publications and local newspapers to promote shows; he made flyers, booked venues, and talked with agents. Bogie's role was making sure that they were on a straight path, a "professional North Star," Godwin said, while Sam found rehearsal spaces. With no internet, getting the word out meant sending mailers, stapling fliers, hanging posters, and reading indie newspapers to see who was upcoming nearby.

Unfortunately, *Knocked Down Smilin'* was always on the fringe; no money to properly advertise, so it took a lot of borrowing, loans, and payback. With the help of an entertainment attorney, the band managed to balance contracts and place their stamp on their work; in the compilation album "Notes from Home," the band had to negotiate the rights to their song "Direction," in case it got used elsewhere without permission. But they never took creative advice from their producer and sound engineer.

"He understood that our band wasn't as traditional as some others in terms of our song structure and arrangements," Pitts said. "Maybe we should have, we should have paid more attention to some of what bands were doing that fit that, to maybe get more radio play or whatever. But we just, we kind of wanted to do our own thing, in our own way."

However, without Jones, *Knocked Down Smilin'* wouldn't have been able to juggle recording, mastering, and distribution into record stores and merch tables on the road.

By 1996, Seattle staples Soundgarden and Pearl Jam were regular FM staples – less heavy and difficult and more focused on big hooky choruses and memorable melodies; by then, the Seattle grunge compositional style was morphing with the sound of classic rock and becoming mainstream. The band reacted by cutting back their surfboard and repositioning for radio airplay. Their second and last album, *Knocked Down Smilin'*, was released in 1996; this album was much more coherent, focused, and clean, and gained some broadcast exposure thanks to a fan down at 106.1 WRDU.

“She was a huge Knocked Down Smilin’ fan and really touted their stuff on the radio. She would give us a lot of feedback at that point of what was working from her perspective as a radio programmer,” Jones said.

Like every other Chapel Hill college band, they wanted to define the year and shake up the scene. But looking back, Godwin pegged the band as marching to a different drum; there weren’t many who were attracted to performing loud guitar rhythms and harmonies, like a square peg in a round hole.

Greek life and the Cat’s Cradle provided grassroots support for groups looking to ride the wave of success. While venues and bars paid some, releasing singles, participating in compilations, and debuting albums were a way to get a foot stuck into the doorway of stardom.

PLAYING LIVE

When playing live, Knocked Down Smilin’ was always synced; the blended evenings and nights, the ringing eardrums, dry throats, and scabbed fingers paid off in play. Hours of practicing and being around each other made the other predictable, even when improvising, each member knew, structurally, what the chords were going to be.

And it went a little crazy.

“Do What You Feel,” the 10th song on “Natural Was the Static”, was the late-night encore – total chaos, a mosh pit, and shouts for more. People would be going up and down, electricity jolting through the whole crowd. Jones called it a “melee of craziness.”

“I want to feel like you’re playing it in an arena or something,” Godwin said. “We were not a shoegazer band. We would like, yell, scream, spiff cuffs, and dance around.”

In the midst of a screaming crowd, they’d peel their shirts off and toss them into a sea of open arms. Members would even leap off the platform and into the sea of people; their fans were friends rather than attendees, and the stage wasn’t an untouched barrier but rather a welcome mat. During sets, Godwin would interact with the crowd, yelling at them, making jokes, and telling stories – a proper show.

The most important part of their live performances was their improvisation. A song could be stretched out, taken apart, but then arrive to land for the final chorus. And they went all out. High energy, a fun watch, and packed.

“Kind of having the show be up and down dynamically and take you on a little bit of a ride,” Godwin said. “And, hopefully, that was kind of collectively we could do some of the things I’m talking about experiencing when I listen to a great singer.”

Katherine Turner, Pitts’ girlfriend at the time, said that the wild and reckless personas of college rock n’ roll did not match the people off-stage.

“I remember being surprised at how sweet and dear they were off stage once I got to know each of them,” she said, “They were a really great and beloved Chapel Hill band comprised of four talented friends who truly cared about each other.”

During the first album’s release at the Cat’s Cradle, the stage was enveloped by hundreds of feet of black, four-inch irrigation pipes with poked holes, coupled with fog machines. When the band played, instrumentals traded blows with hissing steam that trailed along the legs and shoes of the members and seethed into the crowd – an industrial, space feel that reflected the album.

Another resume builder was opening for the Spin Doctors and Hootie and the Blowfish.

They’d played in the same club circuit: Cat’s Cradle in Chapel Hill, the Mad Monk in Wilmington, Flood Zone in Richmond, etc., but Knocked Down Smilin’ were at the right place at the right time at North Carolina State University, where they happened to be playing alongside Hootie after their stint on the David Letterman show.

With the Spin Doctors, Knocked Down Smilin’ was hired to play a couple of opening shows in Wilmington and Winston-Salem in 1992 as their album *Pocket Full of Kryptonite* was flying up the charts. It was fun, Godwin said, playing for a band at a club that would be selling out the PNC Arena – now the Lenovo Center. Playing with Widespread Panic, who were not commercially successful but nonetheless popular, pushed them further down south into Georgia, pulling in large crowds and endless smoke.

Driving up and around the East Coast to play at venues was an experience, too. Notably, as Godwin described, their shitty van gave out, so the rest of the team sat up front in a flatbed truck, while Bogie camped out in their U-Haul of equipment, with the door down, scraping his fingernails on the inside to keep from falling out. When they made it to the bigger cities, time was killed by trekking about, heads peeping in store windows, looking at fliers on lampposts, and occupying someone’s couch – Godwin jokes that he learned to cook from grabbing at ingredients and leftovers at the apartments of more than strangers. While in D.C., awaiting a gig at the Bayou, Bogie and Martin visited the White House dressed in tattered jeans, sweaters, and graphic tees.

It was experiences like these, with each other, that made these times so much fun.

At some point, they'd even brought in a friend of theirs to hop on the road with them to sell makeshift merchandise and make sure they got paid at the end of gigs. "There wasn't that much structure to it," Godwin said.

Sometimes there would be three to a crowd - a solo clap or shout, on a Tuesday in some shifty club in the middle of a state no one ever thinks about; to combat that, the surfers had to break in with the club owners to get a chance to play on a busier day or with a group that draws more of a crowd. However, it wasn't like they never drew large crowds.

Most of the success was in Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Charlotte, and Greenville. Athens, too, in Georgia; it helped that they had friends there. It'd start with head bobbing, lips meeting rims of bottles, music getting a little louder, the lights getting dimmer, cheeks getting pinker, and smoke filling up to the ceiling. Then everything just changes in an instant. The crowd surges, people shout, they get frenzied, hands pumping the air, and clothes fly. When they opened or collaborated with others, Knocked Down Smilin' wanted them to think, "Shit! How can I beat that?!"

"I never thought I'd be playing music in New York City, or, you know, in New Jersey, or Delaware or Pennsylvania," Godwin said.

IN THE END

Knocked Down Smilin' surfed the muted dark and earthy waters of the grunge wave. But the band never made landfall and broke along with the genre, dissipating back into the sea.

Kurt Cobain's death in 1994 was a symbolic end to the Seattle Sound; coupled with rapid commercialization that killed its authenticity, the commodification of anti-materialism, and shift to other musical genres like pop-punk and alternative rock, grunge became a relic of a past time.

In 1996, Godwin packed his bags. The breakup wasn't dramatic or messy; there weren't any busted lips and lost strands of hair, nor did the air feel heavy from exchanges of hurtful words. It wasn't overly emotional either; tears weren't shed, there were no shaky inhales or stuffy sniffing.

"I just said: look, guys, I just got engaged, and we're getting married in a year, he said. "And I'd like to continue playing up until this time or whatever, but then I'm gonna move on."

From there, they all went their separate ways.

Cloyd got engaged, too. Bowles and Pitts played professionally. Pitts went to New York, played for a band called Freeloader, then bounced to Sweden to perform with Apollo Drive. Now he's down in Charleston, bouncing from one gig to another. Bowles moved to L.A. and toured with Stevie Salas and Kenny Wayne Shepherd and then retired early to work in substance rehabilitation.

The band was just short of being rock stars. But they were there at the right place, at the right time to see it all. While no monetary success and wide renown showed in the five long years they played, the longtime support of local friends, acquaintances, and the band's love of music softened the blow.

"We never want to let anything overtake the music for us, you know, as a band," Pitts said. Industry and commercialism never owned them. But maybe it was for the best that it turned out that way.

Godwin now teaches economics at the University. Amidst discussions of "marginal benefits," "utility", and "expected value" with his students, he frequently hears of newer bands to check out – High June, Futurebirds, Deaf Andrews, and the lively performances of student groups at the Back Room. The dark, coursing ripples of grunge are still felt in music today.

He still writes. However, as a jaded adult, it is difficult to capture the young fantasizing of life's problems: romance, work, family, that make it so easy to escape from reality.

"And so, this idea of, I think, why such great songs are written by such young people," Godwin said. "But young bands, I believe, one of the reasons why they catch on is they're able to write something that so many people can relate to."

Are there any regrets? Could they have focused more on songwriting, mixing better, and adjusting their sound? Maybe. But the experience sure as hell wasn't so bad; forming life-long friendships, meeting new people, and exploring new places made up for the long nights, broken sticks and guitar strings, and sore fingers.

"We got to do some pretty cool stuff and see a lot of cool places and meet a lot of cool people," Godwin said.

Turner had a full-circle moment recently. She gave Martin's son all of her Knocked Down Smilin' merch – articles, mailers, posters, and a vintage t-shirt that survived the '90s. Relics that she valued so much in her youth, from a speck in time, were handed to the future. Now, the shirt hangs on his wall – a memory turned symbol of a past generation.

Jones gets happier over the years, re-listening to his early records. He says that one of the good things of starting a band when you're young is the fresh perspective and willingness to explore; unfortunately, getting older comes at the cost of closing the opening to listen to what's going on.

| “Man, we really reached for something,” he said. “We were listening.”