

A Long Walk to Splashy Fen

By Arlo Hennings © from the memoir "Guitarlo"

At a time when I thought my career opportunities in the music business, for the second time, were nil, a Minneapolis musician reintroduced me to the singer-songwriter, folk-rock star Shawn Phillips. Rumor was that he had died after a boating accident 25 years earlier. Shawn had just performed 120 minutes to a sold-out house, proving that he was very much alive.

I recalled he had given it all years ago, so I expected to meet a person drenched in sweat. Instead, he was dry and cool, as though he had been sitting at a corporate desk job in an air-conditioned corner office. He looked older off stage in the stark white basement light. His waist-length hair had thinned and grayed through the years. A pair of crystal clear blue eyes sat oddly mismatched inside what appeared to me to be an unhealthy, pale-white face. I remembered how shy I was the first time I had first met him only briefly, back in the early '70s. I was a stagehand for a one day rock festival in Minneapolis, and am still humbled by the memory of his performance. Instead of the 15-year-old, dropout, acid head, who helped him down off a tractor at the show, I introduced myself from my most recent job as a former PolyGram Music talent scout. He seemed glad that someone from the music business had stopped in.

Looking to make small talk, I passed him a ketchup bottle and asked, "Where have you've been for the past 25 years?"

Between puffs of cigarette smoke, sips of Coca Cola, and mouthfuls of steak, Shawn sketched out his life story. He openly shared his tales of attempted suicide, his mother's suicide, travels with his spy novelist father, the former Kennedy-era CIA director uncle, bad managers, crooked record companies, lost homes, broken marriages . . . ending with his new love for firefighting. In sum, he suffered a loss of dignity and reputation in his music career. I told him that I understood how he felt, and said that we shared some common experiences.

"You've survived 25 years on radio Tinseltown," I said encouragingly.

Behind the armor of his vindictive attitude towards the rock music business, he still had that venerable glow, unique and witty. The lost success of his music career cost him dearly. He had sold several million records and had nothing to show for it.

"An artist still struggling after so much success isn't right," I told him. "Without a good manager no artist could maintain a national-level career."

"Would you like to be my manager?" he asked without hesitation.

The question stunned me at first and I didn't know how to answer. With all the people he must know, why ask me? I enjoyed his acoustic songs but didn't understand his preoccupation with electronic gadgetry. His original blend of combining, folk, rock, and yoga-like singing was remarkable. I could do without the gimmicks. Judging by the turnout though, he had die-hard fans. I cautiously accepted the offer, and we shook hands on it. I then left, wondering how to resurrect the dead career of a former rock star.

Shawn's personal and professional life were in need of disaster relief. The financier of his latest album died from AIDS. That backer left the money to another producer, who spent it on drugs. His house in L.A. was months past due in rent, utilities were being shut off, and his bulimic, ex-model wife drained their meager resources for her medical bills. He had years of unpaid taxes and \$1,000 in fines for double-parking outside a video rental store.

Early on, I thought about letting the job go, but my old dream stopped me. This was my calling and a manager's job was to fix business problems, not be a therapist. But, I had learned from the past that as much as I might try, when working with artists it's impossible to separate business from the personal. It was a risk I was willing to take because of his music. I learned that people married, named their children, found salvation, and were enlightened in response to his songs.

I wanted to know what motivated him. Fame, money, recognition? What were his political, social, and spiritual values? How did he feel about being thought of as the Dalai Lama of rock? What was his attitude toward his craft, his work ethic? What made him happy or angry? Would we get along? A manager and artist are like a married couple, and anyone who has been in a long-term relationship understands that relationships take work.

Early Spring, 1994

"Shawn, I flew all the way to Montreal to meet with you about your future. You said, you would cover my expenses, and now you say you won't?" I was ticked.

"Man, I got to pay my electric bill. My wife is living in the dark," he complained.

I examined his hotel bill. His room was \$200 per night. I then noted hundreds of dollars in charges for pay-per-view porn movies. "Here's your electric bill, *XXX Diaries*," I criticized.

Shawn shrugged.

I found a contract he had just signed, against my advice.

"I told you not to sign that record contract extension until I was here. You signed it and now they're going to release a bunch of crap," I lectured.

"I needed the money, man," he said.

"What good am I if you're not going to listen to me?" I asked. It was a rocky start.

I liked Shawn, but I felt that he had an inability to empathize. He seemed shallow and self-centered, disconnected from other people's feelings. He expected me to be a business manager and also run little errands for him like a lackey. In his rock-star mind, he was spoiled by quick, big money at a young age, and lived in his own world. I believed in the coach approach. If I could prove that he could win the game again, he would score.

"I will put this trip on your bill, understand?" I said. The unpaid bills would add up over time.

He semi-committed, "Yeah, whatever, man."

The first and most important thing we had to do together was create trust. Next to love, trust is the highest bond between two people. To place your fate into a stranger's hands is one of the scariest decisions anyone can make. I had to trust him, too. It was a two-way street.

Earning Shawn's trust wouldn't come easy. He had been let down by too many promises. He admitted that he was embarrassed, believing that he was forgotten. This belief eroded his self-confidence and led to depression. Seeking recovery, he took a sabbatical from the music business and donated all of his time as a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician. He found salvation by sacrificing his life so that others might live. What that alternative life meant to his music remained to be seen.

I was his sixth manager during his 35-year music career. At one point, he had a business manager, road manager, personal manager, and a financial manager. Since the revenue stream had evaporated, he was down to just me — the all-hats manager. I managed bookings, filled out forms like license agreements, negotiated with major labels to get old albums re-released, organized recording projects, decided what music went on a CD, supervised the design of CD covers, organized the music distribution, conducted piracy investigations, arranged interviews, answered fan mail, managed the artist's website, did day-to-day bookkeeping, and hired

publicists, radio promoters, accountants, and attorneys. A lawyer called what I did a conflict of interest, but I called what I did fearless.

“Do you have any leads for me?” I asked.

“I heard rumors that I might be popular in South Africa,” he said.

“All right, I’ll start there,” I told him.

Finally, after canvassing South Africa by phone for a promoter, I received an answer from my queries: “Want to celebrate the birth of a new nation?” Marks asked. His message continued to tell me about a five-year-old South African music festival called Splashy Fen. Its purpose was to bring together all peoples through music.

April 25, 1994

“As you know, South Africa is about to be liberated,” said festival promoter David Marks in a faxed memo:

Our first free and democratic elections take place on April 27, 1994 — so naturally we are very excited and want to celebrate the occasion with those who supported the struggle against apartheid. . . You will be the first, since the ’70s cultural embargo to enjoy the first major music and cultural happening in the new South Africa. What better way to celebrate the birth of a new nation and the death of apartheid?

To my utter shock, it was the same David Marks, the sound man, I had met at Woodstock. The tour came together within a week. That’s all the time I had to learn about the complexities of South African politics and Shawn’s 17 multimillion selling albums repertoire. I learned that Shawn was a triple platinum (50,000 records sold per award) seller in that country; a lot of records in a market of only nine million “white” people — the ones mostly likely able to afford to buy records. He must have some royalties due.

“Did you ever get a royalty statement for the territory of South Africa?” I asked Shawn.

“No, I only got the information second hand from a South African who said they saw my records in the stores,” he said.

As I copied the last word of Marks' fax over to my travel diary, the captain of South African Airways flight #202 announced, "At 5 a.m. you will see the sunrise over Africa."

April 26, 1994

JOHANNESBURG: “Eight bombs exploded around South Africa; including one at a crowded taxi stand in Germiston, South Africa, killing 10 and injuring 36. Yesterday, 150 pounds of TNT took the lives of nine innocent people in the largest bomb to date outside the Monte Carlo Hotel on Bree Street in Central Johannesburg.”

I was safe flying over the Atlantic at 30,000 feet. Back home, my wife and daughter, didn’t know if I was safe or not.

After reading the paper, I was having second thoughts, "A rock 'n' roll tour in South Africa?" I showed the headlines to Shawn.

“I don't care about the money,” Shawn said. “I think a lot of my music really relates to what's going on over there right now. Compassion for the human condition has always interested me. I want to share that with the people. That’s why I want to perform in South Africa, no matter what the risks.” He spoke with great conviction, and I was glad he had organized his thoughts about this unusual tour. Upon our arrival, journalists from all the major South Africa newspapers, television, and radio were scheduled to meet us at the airport.

During the long flight I read Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. We owed everything to Mandela. He changed the future of a nation and became one of the greatest heroes of the 20th Century. How did Shawn's music play a role in the dangerous rebellion to free a country of racism?

Before landing, the pilot announced that the international arrival section of the airport had been destroyed. Fortunately, no one was hurt. When we deplaned, we were routed around piles of unrecognizable debris. At the customs check point, I stood in line behind the actor Danny Glover, and recalled that he was an avid Mandela supporter. Officials glanced at our passports and waved us through.

Shortly afterwards, Shawn and I found ourselves seated at a table of bored-looking journalists. They had pens and pads, but no cameras, recorders, or microphones. The young men seemed eager though to get Shawn's first impression of the new South Africa.

"Welcome to the new South Africa, mate. How do you feel to be the first American musician to tour in our post-apartheid country?" the reporter asked.

"I think it's the most exciting thing I've done," Shawn answered.

"Did you know how popular you are here?"

"No, I've only heard rumors."

"What do you make of our country's situation?"

"Change was inevitable and you have a great leader."

"How do you describe your music?"

"Edgar Winter once said to me, 'Hey man, you're from Texas. How come you got so far from the roots?' I said, 'Because there's a whole tree above the ground, Edgar!'"

"What is it about your lyrics that so many South Africans find compelling?"

"I still credit my father as a tremendous influence, particularly as it relates to his use of the English language in song. When I tried to read him a lyric once, I'm standing there all proud, he grabbed me by the front of the shirt and he jerked me about an inch away from his face, and he said, 'Listen, punk. I've been writing for half a century, and I still can't write a better line than 'Jesus wept.'"

"How do you feel about South African music?"

"We all know how much Paul Simon turned the world onto South African music with his album, *Graceland*. From that record, I learned about great South African musicians like Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu. Also on the record, and joining me at Splashy Fen, is the amazing vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo."

"Will you take any side trips on your tour to visit the shanty towns, and see what apartheid did to my country?"

"I would certainly enjoy absorbing all South Africa has to offer and share it with the world, any way I know how."

"Thank you, Mr. Phillips. Have a great tour."

April 27, 1994

We met Theo Coetzee, our tour promoter, at his home in Randburg, a suburb of Johannesburg. Like all suburbs in "Jo'Burg," it was exclusively white, and guarded by private security and electrical razor wire. Nearby shops were covered by security bars; no businesses stayed open late. It felt like living in a state of paranoia.

For Theo, an Afrikaner, the tour was the answer to his lifelong dream as an avid, antiapartheid rebel. The election meant the world to him, whereas other whites were booking the first flight out

of the country. At the time, Theo was hobbling around on crutches, his foot in a cast. He explained that he'd been smoking *dagga* (marijuana) and fell. Otherwise, he seemed capable enough.

This was Theo's first attempt at organizing a tour. He was bringing in an international performer and scheduled his shows during a time when his country swung in the balance of civil war. While South Africa prepared for the mother of elections, on April 27, 1994, and despite reports that travel by car was not recommended we had packed for our 500-mile journey to an outdoor music festival located in the heart of Zulu country, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

While Theo ran about the city doing errands, his maid stepped in to wash our clothes and cook. I had never met anyone who could afford a maid and was curious about her. She was in her late 30s, spoke a tribal language, and lived with her son in Theo's back yard in a small, one-room building. She was who Mandela fought for: her right to vote; the right to have a say in her life; her right to leave the compound; her right to do anything. She was not a slave or being held against her will. But her options were limited.

When Theo returned he explained in his Afrikaner accent, which sounded like a mix of British meets Dutch with a lot of slang thrown in, "The family had come with the house when I bought it years ago. One day, the woman's husband came to the door begging for shelter because a rival clan was going to kill him. I opened the door to them and they stayed ever since. Every house owned by whites has a black staff. We give them a job and shelter. They came with the house, so I let them in. It's the humane thing to do."

On our way out of Johannesburg, we passed a voting hall where thousands of Afrikaner, British, Zulu, Ndebele, Venda, Xhosa, and Indian people — speaking more than 11 different languages — laughed and cried together for the first time in history.

Mandela supporters ran up and down the street, waving yellow-green-and-black flags into the air, shouting, "*Tata*," (Father).

When Theo switched on the radio to the South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC), the one and only Big Brother-controlled media outlet, I heard three interviews: Nelson Mandela, Presidential hopeful Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and Shawn Phillips.

I turned to Theo in awe and said, "Who is listening to this broadcast?"

"All of South Africa," Theo answered.

Watchful of the crowd, the police rested nearby against a footlocker filled with machine guns. The old laws were still enforced and the blacks lined up by the thousands on street corners to be carted off to their shanty towns in small white vans called a *kombie*. Being in the city after the work day, after dark, required a special I.D. card called a *spanky*. Without the I.D. they could be arrested.

I didn't know what freedom meant to them other than the right to vote. For centuries, their lives had been ruled by whites; what would this new-found freedom do? Because South Africa's infrastructure — banking, police, airlines, media, etc. — had been run by white people, change was a scary proposition to those who previously weren't involved in managing their own lives, let alone a country. Some tribal people believed that Mandela was going to literally build them a new house the next day.

To that question Mandela said, "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

"The reason apartheid is ending was because the South African rugby team got beaten to a pulp by the worst team in the league," Theo said, in jest. "Therefore, unable to sign new players

because of international sanctions, the government had no choice other than to abolish apartheid in order to save their rugby team from further humiliation.”

Breaking all bets of an impending civil war, Jo’Burg was strangely peaceful on the first day of the elections. The highway to Natal Province, however, was cluttered with armored convoys. We encountered many security stops along the way and police wanted to know what was in Shawn’s music cases. Theo talked us through every check point.

A few hours later South Africa opened up to the *Highveld*, the broad, grassy plateau that sweeps across the South African interior. The landscape was reminiscent of the American West. We pulled into a gas station and were suddenly mobbed by an army of young, black boys dressed in pressed uniforms. While addressing Theo as *Sir*, two boys ran the pump, three rubbed down the van and windows with a cloth, and shined our shoes.

As we drove deeper into rural South Africa, the demographics changed dramatically. Soon, all of the villages were populated by black Africans. It dawned on me had they wished us any harm, they could have squashed us like bugs. To the contrary, they paid us no heed. I suspected that if they harmed white people, their entire town would be wiped out. I also thought that they were simply peaceful people; the young men, perhaps, a mix of intentions.

Coming over a hill, I had a National Geographic moment when I saw a beautiful, barefoot young tribal girl balancing a large load of firewood on her head. My head was dangling out the window to get a better look and she stared back at me with the largest coal black eyes on Earth. As the hill flattened out, I saw her village of squatter shacks erected out of dump debris, scattered beneath a handful of bony trees. There was no water, no electricity; they slept on straw mats upon floors made from cow dung. This, my first trip to a developing country, opened my eyes to the appalling living conditions that these people endured. Like Mandela, who had spent 27 years in prison, the poor blacks in South Africa had spent generations behind bars made of hatred and fear.

April 28, 1994

“Look out!” I yelled at Theo to slow down.

Along the *Highveld* roadside a sign read, *Beware — Rhino Crossing*. Theo assured us that no rhinos had been spotted near the toll route for decades. “Like the American buffalo,” he explained, “once they were everywhere, now they can only be found in game reserves.”

By dusk, the road climbed into the fog-clasped Drakensburg Mountains. Darkness, weaving roads, rain, and cattle slowed our journey further. Hours behind schedule, we reached a hand-painted sign, *Splashy Fen — 15k*. Bumper-to-bumper traffic stretched ahead of us. When we arrived at the entrance to the Zulu wilderness area campground, a raging storm blew in off the Indian Ocean. Within minutes our van got stuck in a foot of mud.

Somehow, word of our arrival made its way to Bart Fokkens, professional hang glider, and the festival manager. Soon enough, we heard a voice outside the van. We breathed a sigh of relief. It was Bart.

“*Sawubona*,” he greeted us in Zulu. “To roll over the mud, you need to deflate the tires, avoid the bad ruts, and stick to the right. Whatever you do, don’t stop,” he instructed.

The next hour passed like a log chute ride at an amusement park. Up and down a grade that would put any four wheeler to the test, we slid our way past the music tent and on to the musician’s cottage — a warm, three-bedroom, thatched-roof cottage with a fireplace. We had an extra room, so I invited about a dozen musicians out of the rain to stay with us.

Our first night at Splashy Fen was unforgettable. The grounds owner Peter Ferraz, a retired journalist, and his wife and three lovely daughters, put to rest my fears about being caught in some kind of Zulu uprising. They built a fire, passed guitars, wine, and smiles. For hours, many Splashy Fen musicians — like Saranti, from the band Keep the Change — entertained us.

I had been gone for almost two weeks. With the hectic schedule and eight-hour time difference I hadn't been able to call back home. Danika was now four years old and I missed my family dearly. Courtesy of our host's phone, I was finally able to place the long-distance call. Hearing the voices of my wife and daughter warmed my soul, and uplifted me further. I was able to reassure them that I was okay and safe, and the tour still on track. I would be back in a couple more weeks.

April 29, 1994

Splashy Fen, the Woodstock of South Africa. In the morning I stepped outside and inhaled, am I really here? I looked out to Dragons Head, the highest peak in the Southern Drakensburg Mountains of Kwa Zulu, Natal — 10,000 feet above sea level. The storm brought days of rain that mixed with the cold mountain air. Below Dragons Head, 5,000 mixed-race, barefoot, soaked-to-the-bone, graying flower children, new-age ethnics, professionals, teenagers, and toddlers danced about smoldering campfires. As strange rhythms echoed across the valley floor, tent doors flapped like Mandela's green flags in the freezing drizzle. Exploring the campgrounds, I discovered the food gardens, (a group of tents with outdoor grills), which included some South African delights like Bunny Chow, Zulu Porridge, and regional beer. After I chose a Bunny Chow, Shawn met mud-clad, smiling fans.

"Far out," a young person said, stumbling upon Shawn.

His companion just stared, stoned. Recognizing the American artist, they offered him a toke of their Durban poison stick (marijuana), which Shawn declined, "Besides water, I never put anything into my body before I perform."

Marijuana was an unofficial export of the Natal province, which accounted for its popularity and its abundance. Earlier that morning the police had set up a roadblock in front of the festival entrance and arrested dozens of people who had marijuana. I was puzzled by the busts: despite all the heavily publicized rumor of civil war, how is it the police could afford to spare so many officers over a few harmless joints?

April 30, 1994

At the information tent, I began to immerse myself in the local South African music scene. *Guitars for Africa: 3rd Ear Music* — a compilation album featuring 24 of South Africa's finest guitarists — was as good as any I heard in the States. One outstanding recording was by Sipho Mchunu, who demonstrated Zulu guitar, a unique technique with a special tuning/strumming system.

The lineup for that day featured 30 bands and many memorable performances. Saranti's band, Keep the Change, opened with the melody of Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock." They changed the lyrics to "By the time I get to Splashy Fen," which concert-goers embraced. Keep the Change also created an original sound by combining elements of jazz, folk, and rock with their own Euro/American pop style. The group reminded me of the Roches meet Crosby, Stills, and Nash.

Another highlight was Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the legendary 10-man acappella group that sang on Paul Simon's Grammy-winning album *Graceland*. They filled the music tent with their authentic, chain-gang gospel, in voices deeper than a South African gold mine. In response to

their version of the South African-penned hit, “The Lion Sleeps Tonight,” the crowd saluted the group as heroes, and exploded in applause.

The University of Natal African Music Ensemble also caught our ear. Using handmade, “otherworldly” instruments, the group created a rich Afro tapestry of plucked, strummed, and shaken folk songs from Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. The Hairy Legged Lentil Eaters followed with an unforgettable performance. They combined banjo, violin, and electric guitar to create new mixtures of folk and political satire.

Beneficiaries of the festival included the Wildlife Society, Ladysmith Black Mambazo Trust, the Underburg Himeville Education Foundation, and the Drakensburg African Schools Organization.

Later that night, Shawn would take the stage. At the lower stage altitude of 6,000 feet, combined with heavy fog, he found it hard to sing and keep his guitars tuned. Regardless of the elements, he performed a couple of his favorite songs from each of his 17 albums. I argued with him though about his music program.

“This is a folk fest. Why are you going to use a computer with all that gadgetry?”

“Because I get bored sitting there with just a guitar.”

“But man and his guitar is what they want. It’s what they remember about you. This new electronic show is experimental at best. Stick to what works.”

I struggled to get Shawn to take direction. My experience with him was his way or the highway. That inflexibility may have worked in the 1970s, but by the 1990s, the audience had changed. In light of his stubbornness, I realized I couldn’t “manage” him. The best I could do was to support him as his agent.

When Shawn came onto the stage, the entire campground sat in suspense under the music tent. I could feel their anticipation running through the ground, and up to the back of my neck, where my hair stood on end. I had seen Shawn when I was only 15 years old. Now here he was, the former broken musician, reunited with his lost fans in a lost country that had reunited with its lost hero. With the end of the cultural embargo, artists from around the world would soon flock to the new South Africa, engaging in cultural exchange. A new dialogue with the world was on top of that mountain that night, and Shawn opened the conversation.

As I predicted, the audience respectfully watched him fiddle and diddle with his contraptions, but when he started into one of his classics with only guitar, they cheered.

“Shawn, play ‘Ballad of Casey Deiss,’” they shouted. “Play the guitar, man.”

Shawn was too into his own show. He thought that the gadgetry made him look cool, but it diffused his natural energy. Halfway into the show he told a joke. I think it was the first time these folks had ever heard a Texas accent in real life. His icebreaker dialogue with the people won the crowd back into his favor.

Shawn finished the set on his keyboard with “Peace Song.” The long instrumental introduction, filled with its outer space sounds, was like a film score for *Star Trek*. It was perfect, if whacked on *dagga*. Taking a final bow he raised his arms as if he were about to fly, and said in Zulu, “Hambe Kahle” (Go well, go with God). The new South Africa loved him, and demanded another 20-minute encore.

After the show, Marks spoke about the days not long before when audiences of mixed race in South Africa were prohibited by law.

“When bands had black and white musicians like the Flames and Freedom’s Children, there had to be one show for black people and another show for white people. White and black musicians in the same band were not permitted to play on the same stage together. The way

around that one was for the black musicians to play behind a curtain when they were entertaining a white audience, and the other way around when the audience was black."

I began to realize what a cultural embargo meant. Artists like David Marks and Shawn were cheated out of their royalties via third-party distributors. Banned American music, for example, poured into South Africa through exporters in Germany. But, as far as the American labels were concerned, it was all perfectly legal as long as not sold directly. However, the number of recordings sold became conveniently lost in the shuffle. The biggest surprise was how Shawn's albums came through these clandestine distribution channels and wound up airing on local radio, eventually making their way onto the turntables of disillusioned South African youth. South Africa had one of the largest and most vibrant music scenes in the world, but no one outside of South Africa was aware. American publishers never paid Marks for his apartheid protest hit song, "Master Jack."

"When I called to ask for my royalties in the States the publisher called me a racist and hung up," Marks told me.

I set up a meeting with the South African record company that had been selling Shawn's records during apartheid. "Where is the money for Shawn Phillips' records?" I asked the label executive.

"That was too long ago. I'm sorry. We no longer have financial records dating back to that period. How about a couple of record awards mate?" The white record executive grinned.

"Surely, there must be some accounting for hundreds of thousands of sold records?" I was shocked.

He rolled his fingers on his desk, "Sorry mate, we sent the money to where it was supposed to go, and where it went from there, I don't know."

The story of the missing record company royalties would become a worldwide scandal. The loss of royalties wrecked careers and lives, including those of Rodriguez (Sugarman), and Shawn Phillips.

During the music festival, I hung out backstage and spoke with many South African musicians. Zakes Myataza, a Zulu musician who had not stopped playing his guitar since we arrived, said, "My grandmother taught me to throw harmonies like bones: both tell the future."

Xhosa percussionist Enoch Lengoasa remarked, "Every tribe has its own record of dreams. Ours is the praise song."

The first cultural event of the new South Africa was *lekker cracker*, Afrikaans, (super good). Hundreds of musicians performed nearly every type of music imaginable. More than 5,000 people gladly listened. There was no violence.

Shawn and I, as his manager/agent, returned to South Africa to do four more countrywide tours (1995-1998). Each year I returned, I hardly recognized the changing South Africa. I saw little change though for most blacks, except for a new and small, growing middle class.

The opening up of the country did develop into one of the world's largest tourism markets. The new music of South Africa found its long overdue place among the world music charts.

Unfortunately, much of its music history, and the role music played in ending apartheid, was not professionally documented. David Marks founded the Hidden Years Archive Project, the largest audio library of indie and indigenous South African music in the country, consisting of 50 years of anti-apartheid-era music history. It remained ignored and unfunded, deteriorating in boxes.

Twenty years later, marked the 26th year of Splashy Fen, now billed as "the ultimate outdoor experience."

By 1995, the celebrities began to arrive for their share of Kruger gold. I was the middle agent for the first Crosby, Stills and Nash tour of South Africa. On the second night in Johannesburg, Stills got so stoned that he fell in his hotel bathroom and broke his nose. As a result all of the CSN dates had to be re booked. Stills misbehavior cost my friends millions of dollars. Llyods of London, the insurance company, refused to pay the lost ticket sales claim citing that Stills was a menace. For the remainder of the tour Stills played with a huge bandage on his face and could not sing. The nicest and most sober member of the band was Nash who returned to do a solo tour.

On our 4th and final South African tour together, Shawn married a woman from South Africa and settled there permanently. I returned home to Minneapolis, convinced — more than ever — that music could change the world.

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