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# SOUTHCOAST Artists Index

*This story was collected through our partnership with the SouthCoast Artist Index, led by Ron Fortier.*

*These transcripts were produced using the Zoom transcription feature.*

**Interviewer Name: Ron Fortier**

**Storyteller Name: Jim Charette**

Ron Fortier

Hi, this is Ron Fortier with another episode of the In Focus Podcast brought to you by the Artist Index. Dot com and we're ready to go with a gentleman that we've been trying to connect with through no. Fault of his own. But the technology just seems to be jumping in a way all the time. And with that in mind, guest, could you please introduce yourself?

Jim Charette

I'm hoping that you can hear me this time. But it's it's Jim Charette.

Ron Fortier

Tell us a little bit about. Well, you know, you've gone through this twice before. Tell us a little bit about your your name. I mean, you know, we both have French. Names and you. Know how they're simple to us, but other people butcher them and you know just so just just spell your name and and pronounce your name and and.

Speaker

Oh God, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Any stories that you've got attached to it?

Jim Charette

Well, my my full name is. James Raymond Charette junior. I dropped a junior a long time ago, but and I also prefer to be called Jim. I thought James was kind of the Butler sounding name when I was a kid. You know, so. My nanny used to call me Jimmy and it when she yelled it out the back door, you know, all 5 foot, nothing of her. It scared the hell out of me because that's what she was mad. But the new charette? We it hasn't really pronunciation, though it seems pretty clear you know how to say it to me, I've. Had been, I've been called the worst one. I've been called was was one of those sales calls when they asked for John Mays chatter heat. I get busted. I've got laughing and thanked him. And told him that, you know, he had the record for the worst pronunciation of my name ever. You know, I get the chariot, the charez, the sheriff Tay. You know, different ones like that. But at least not in the art community, because most people have heard. Of you know the. Charette art



supplies.

Ron Fortier

It's it's. It's funny, isn't it? How how people can alter your name. Now a couple of interesting things have happened since our first two attempts. You know, we've had other guests on. And one of the guests mentioned how actually, uh was it was it a guest though? Was it just a conversation with Don Wilkinson? Yeah, I was. It was a conversation with Don Wilkinson and probably another guest. I mean, we've been doing a lot of these. So I'm losing track. And I'm getting old. But this wife.

Jim Charette

Oh, OK.

Speaker

Not no.

Ron Fortier

His wife Elizabeth, once asked why is the art community in Fall River so different from the art community in new beds?

Jim Charette

The biggest difference is the fact that the Bedford had schools and still high schools. You know, it has a lot to do with swing because a. Lot of the. People that came to go to, you know, the swing school design stayed New Bedford and that. Is what made the community I think it was mostly former Swain students had got together and and open gallery X if I'm not mistaken.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that's correct. Yeah.

Jim Charette

And there's never, I mean, you know we have BCC here in Fall River. I I grew up in Fall River and spent most of my time here. I I looked in the Bedford for, you know, a few years when I first met my wife I came up there and oh I had a blast when I was there. But you know circumstances changed and we're back in Fall River but there really is no art community here there's some outstanding. Artists here, but as far as like a group of them getting together, we've never really could do that. I've tried. I've worked with different you know segments like the different clicks as it were, but that's the problem. That's what it comes. Down to I. Don't I never. Got that feeling in New Bedford, everybody was about art, you know, and everybody was very supportive of everybody else. I I love New Bedford. And again, I miss it. You know I.

Ron Fortier

Tell me.

Jim Charette

I had my studio there and it was amazing, you know.

Ron Fortier

Or you you became a big part of it. I mean, and that's, you know, that's one of the reasons, you know, I when I when I message you said you know that you're you're the one of the big fish. I mean you're one of the the interviews that and I yeah yeah and I I interviewed Quinn Sullivan you. Know. So I mean and I mean that. Would all honestly because you are a pivotal guy. You're like. To use another analogy, you're like the Forrest Gump of Art around here because you've been.



Jim Charette

Well, I don't know. Well, you you gotta hurt. But OK, no, no.

Ron Fortier

No, no. And I mean that in a positive sense cause that's one of my favorite movies. You know, in fact, I just watched it last night again for the millionth time.

Jim Charette

OK.

Ron Fortier

But what I mean by that is that you happen to be in the right place at the right time when something is happening, you know that's that's what I mean. So I've got 3. Questions about fall. River this this three institutions, let's call them that. One of them is the Fall River Art Association. The other one is the Narrows. And the other one institution is probably too much of a lofty term for them, but the mill billies, could you give us a breakdown on each one of those?

Jim Charette

Well, I mean, as far as the mobilities go, there are some really talented guys and they pulled together some amazing shows. You know, they had these October fests and I get to meet a lot more of like the younger crowd of artists going in there. I mean, I brought some you know, some of the guys that I knew already. Into it with me like. Dave Aguillard and Chuck Boucher and Brian Fox even was down there checking out the shows too. You know, it was to me when I saw something about it on social media, it seemed like it would be another institution, as it were. But I think part of the problem is. They're all young. Guy. So they would. Doing that thing and they're off doing other things now, you know, they kind of. I can't say they dropped the ball, they just went in a different direction after doing a few shows. And, you know, they had some problem with crowds coming in and they they got great reviews in the Herald News and whatnot. You know, Mark, you know, it said it was like going to a New York studio there but. You know, they're all young guys and they're all doing different things now, you know. And I, I I'm glad I was there when I was there. You know, I I didn't. Know how long it was going to last, but it. Was great well. It did you? Know there's we get the fall of Art association which. I'm not a. Huge fan because it seems like a bunch. Of people that. Have you know nothing better to do? So they opened an art association. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe it's changed this and I've had shows there too. But like I was invited to have a show there, and once I went in to start talking to him about doing the show, they want to charge me to have it. And I'm like, whatever you guys just invited. Me to have a show. And I said, well, alright, we'll talk about that. When is it going to be open? And it came down to, it's going to be open about four to six hours a month because they're not in general, they're they're like I'm trying not to be an ask about it because I've seen some good shows there too. And they've been some good. It's there, but it's more like like they're the wives of doctors and lawyers that have money and nothing else to do so. They go hang out there.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, I mean.

Jim Charette

I don't know how many of the. Members are actually are. Is that?

Ron Fortier

You know, I mean, they've been years ago with.

Jim Charette

I went in with. Well, I'm sorry, what?



Ron Fortier

They've been open for a long time, too. I mean, I mean, they've been in existence. Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

Yeah, I went in. With Chuck Boucher and Dave Agia. When? The three of. Us were working at Riverside Art back in the late 80s, early. It was in the. 80s still, because we're, you know, just gotten out of school, we had all gone to Swain. And we went in there and loved the building because I had a solo show and I they told me I had more work in that show than anybody had ever done. So we took a good look around the building and we had some ideas we wanted to join. We wanted to give it some new blood and they said to us, oh, this is great. We went to a meeting we we want. To talking about it. Ourselves and we'll get back to you. And that was well back in the 80s. I still haven't gotten the call, you know. So and and again the mill billies to me seem to have so much more fire. When I met those guys and and I saw good things there, you know, they were already doing things that nobody else was doing. The thing that I did for them that they they get a kick out when they started all they all started calling Uncle Jim after that was when I first started talking with them, they were telling me they kept inviting the the mayor who we're playing again at the time, I've gotten to be friends with will as a result of this, but. At the time, they had run into him at the little events. You know that they had around the city and they invited him to their shows and he'd never show up. So I said, well, I have an idea and I don't mind taking some \*\*\*\*, but something that I did that put somebody up. So do you mind? And they're like, no. No, go ahead and I put together an ad. Will Flanagan because he claimed to be the mayor who supports the arts in Fall River. He was all about the arts. And all I did was do this, you know. These kind of punk rock looking and sort of fly, you know, the digital thing? Yeah, a digital version of that. And I kept asking him about art, and he kept changing the subject until the last one said, well, you know, you say that you're the mayor, you know, you're the mayor about the arts in Fall River and what it what is it that you've done for the artists? And his answer was I like food. So I was. I was. Pretty, I mean back then I was probably. I told everybody when I'd beat. Him I'm like. I'm an \*\*\*\*\* and the chances are pretty good that one day I will be an \*\*\*\*\* to you. So I'm apologizing in. Advance and warning you you know. Which actually you know. So I didn't care if I get. Into trouble, I worked. As an editorial cartoonist for the Herald News for a couple of years. And I was in trouble all. The time I eventually got fired from that job. And I still to this day. Don't have an answer why the publisher came in one day looked. At my editor and said. And and and I asked her. And I'm like, what? What happened? She goes. I don't know. Six months later. Same. Thing you know. Well, so because I was attacking people and doing my job, I made fun of the fire department, the Police Department, all of it you. Know. Mm-hmm. But to yeah, the thing with the mayor, I posted that. That flyer that I put together on Facebook cause I said, well, we got social media, we go nuts with this, so I posted it and I told everybody to share it. I had everybody list. That was part of the mill Billy crowd and they shared the \*\*\*\* out of it. Half hour later, I got a call from the mayor secretary. She wanted to know when the next show was.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, sometimes.

Jim Charette

OK, well, he said. You can my secretary call you. Yeah. So he and he came, he came to the mix show. He didn't. He didn't show up with an entourage either. He just came, hung out with us for a couple hours and then came back the next day to talk to us about things that you like to do. In the city. You know. And they did. Well, I I already had plenty of stuff that I was doing and I wasn't technically a part of the new abilities. I was just trying to help them out, you know. And so they went out and they were painting like the plant pots around the city. They did a couple of murals in. The city, you know, things. Yeah, and it it made a. Difference for a while, you know.

Ron Fortier

Well, let me ask you a question.



Jim Charette

At least it added a little more flesh out.

Ron Fortier

About 10 years ago, I was interim marketing director for the for professional and continuing education at UMass Dartmouth and we had our offices. In the old Cherry web building. And it was like, you know. That's across the street from the the new courthouse.

Speaker

You guys.

Jim Charette

Oh yeah, yeah, I had a.

Ron Fortier

Show in that building. Yeah, yeah, yeah. There was a lady named Victoria. I think it is. She had a British British accent. I think she was the one. That was organizing shows.

Jim Charette

Oh, shoot. Awesome.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, she was like.

Jim Charette

She's awesome.

Ron Fortier

A. She was like a A like. Like like the Tasmanian devil? I mean, she's like, never stopped. You know. But there was a couple of my God.

Jim Charette

Ohh, I love going to.

Ron Fortier

Talking to her, yeah, there was a. Couple of little parks. One of them was if you're looking at the building, it was directly to the right and they had some incredible St. sculptures, you know, like metal and stuff like that and some murals and such.

Jim Charette

Ohh yeah yeah.

Ron Fortier

And I remember I remember a time saying to myself, wow, I can feel this, like, energy in Fall River here. That sadly, I don't feel in. New Bedford you know. Now that this is like 2010, so I was like 2 years short of as I always refer to it coming out. You know, I I. Was, you know, I was like coming out to be a painter again in 2012, but at in 2010 it was like, so incredibly vibrant. And then I think it was a couple and.

Speaker

Hey, guys.



Jim Charette

Yeah. Well, again, the energy donor on this, it was the end result. They had tried to do like like an art area downtown. And they were trying to offer.

Ron Fortier

Yes. Yeah.

Jim Charette

Space this artist to work as long. As you could let. People come in during the day, kind of a thing, you know, like storefronts.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

They were doing that. They had what the hell? Was it? Oh, it's called the Arts Overlay district.

Ron Fortier

OK.

Jim Charette

Which kind of fell apart on them because they really didn't do a good job. I'm again, I hate to say it, but they kind of dropped the ball, you know, they came up with a great idea. I approached them and I never. Nobody ever responded to me.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. It it was a shame too, because I mean that that court, I mean, I I never, ever would imagine myself saying, wow, what a beautiful building. I mean, you know, that courthouse is gorgeous. That whole area of the times, like, really coming together between the arts and the little shops and stuff like that, you know?

Speaker

See you.

Ron Fortier

What about?

Speaker

The arrows.

Jim Charette

Yeah, sorry. I mean, it's a whole injustice down there. I mean, everything else around there is. It's really bad downtown. I mean, I mean, there is no real downtown.

Ron Fortier

Well, I haven't been down in a while, so.

Jim Charette

Unless you know. Yeah. Unless you're looking to buy drugs, there really isn't nothing to do downtown. Yeah. And trust me, you can buy drugs all up and down downtown, right?



Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's it's changed quite a bit. How about the? Narrows now. The now. The narrows. As, as Don Wilkinson said, seems to lean more towards the performing arts than it does the visual arts. What's your

Jim Charette

Yeah, they I've had my issues with them. You know, I've since, I mean, I've become friends with the Pat Norton. The guy who. Runs the place you know. But I've also butted. Heads with him a lot over the. Years I used. To work for a screen printer in the building too, there's a place called dark side ink on the other side of the building. So that's when I get to know him. Yeah, and I've shown work at at the Narrows myself, but the little billies, in fact, we had. A show that. We we had people there because we advertised it. The Narrows did next to no advertising. And that that I was disappointed with and when I went in one of my paintings was hung sideways. And when I. Said what the hell? She said. Oh, well, it fit that part of. The wall and. Like if my wife hadn't been there.

Speaker

That's how it works.

Jim Charette

I would have left with all of my paintings. Serious. Are you kidding? Me, I mean. And it wasn't like I don't really do abstract work, so it wasn't an abstract painting. If there was a figure in. There you could. See the figure. If you turn it turned it sideways. So I I just I I. Lost my mind for a. Little bit there and I like I said my wife. Had been there, I left with all the work.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

I was. Well, yeah, you know, I mean that that told me everything I needed to know about the narrow was at that point.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I guess it also.

Jim Charette

You know and like and I've got Chuck Blucher is. Hey, what's that?

Ron Fortier

And I guess that it it it in itself.

Jim Charette

Oh, let's say Chuck Michael studio in there.

Ron Fortier

Tailspin Tail spun studios.

Jim Charette

And he was. Exactly. And he was upstairs, like the other artists. Vanya verus. I think her name is. I could be wrong. In her last name but. You know, there's a bunch of them. Has studios upstairs where the music venue was, and then they decided well. We're going to take you out of. Here and put you down on the second floor. And just have the music upstairs, which, OK, they're expanding their music and you. I know Chuck, for one, took a massive hit on sales because he did great up there because half of his work is about music. I had looked into going in there



when I first moved back to Fall River. I got a whole tribe of. Step kids. You know I can't. I can't afford a studio now, I mean. When I lived. In New Bedford, we were living together, but I didn't have the responsibility precise, so I can afford my studio if it didn't make money, I could at least. Afford to keep. It you know? Mm-hmm. But I I can't do that here. You know? I'm. I'm married now, so my responsibilities change, you know. I wouldn't talk to him about it. And you know, like Chuck had talked to somebody in there and they gave me a price about something I said. Well, I mean, that's fair enough, but I still. I can't. Afford that? You know I.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

Worked my \*\*\* off all the time, but I'm not always making money, though. You know, like every artist I go through.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

I worked with a. Tattoo artist I had money like shooting out of. My ass all. The time and I spent every \*\*\* \*\*\*\* cent of having a.

Speaker

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

Good time too. Yeah, you know. Well, hey, I I didn't know that I was gonna live past 40 and find somebody when I was almost 50 to marry, you know.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

I'm your. I'm from your school, punk rock generation. I didn't think there was a future. So I look at it that way.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, let me let me ask you a question.

Jim Charette

And house where I was.

Ron Fortier

Go ahead.

Jim Charette

No, no. I was going to say.

Speaker

I'm sorry.

Jim Charette

Go ahead and ask the question.





Ron Fortier

Was that your first marriage? Or is that your first marriage rather?

Jim Charette

That's my first only marriage. And and fortunately for me, I'm 1/3, so she's already got the. \*\*\*\*\* out of the way. Hopefully. Well, yeah, you know and. And I'll tell you what Heather and I have been together for almost almost a decade now, and we've done all the worst things that we can do to each other. As a couple and we survived it.

Ron Fortier

Ah, that's good.

Jim Charette

And I'm I'm still crazy about her. You. Know, yeah. Yeah, you know, it's like, hey, and I, I mean, yeah, I know I've been. Accused of brutally at times, but it's just the truth, you know well. We were. Both going through \*\*\*\* when we. Met and we had to work it out. Yeah, but we can't enough about each other to work it out, and we weathered the storm. So far, knock on wood, you know.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, let's, let's.

Jim Charette

And we'll be coming up on our 4th wedding anniversary this year.

Ron Fortier

Let's talk about you as Jim the.

Speaker

Well, and had.

Jim Charette

A huge impact on my work too so.

Ron Fortier

All right. All right. Yeah, we can bring that. And like. Let's let's.

Jim Charette

And we'll be coming up. On our 4th wedding anniversary this year.

Ron Fortier

Let's talk about Jim the artist now. Jim, you're. You're a tattoo artist, a cartoon artist, editorial cartoon artist, a painter and a digital artist that I miss.

Jim Charette

I've done the humor. I've done the humor cartoons too.

Ron Fortier

Alright, so you're multifaceted. How did all of this happen?



Jim Charette

What? Well, it started with cartoons, I suppose. And yes, I played the accordion as a child. That's what that means to the music. Serious.

Ron Fortier

Don't get out of here.

Jim Charette

Well, that there is a funny part to all of that, of course, yeah. Besides the obvious that it was the accordion. But I started when I was like in 3rd grade because some really cute girls came in and played the accordion for us at an assembly. And I thought they were cute. That's more what I was into. But I liked the sound of the instrument they were playing. They had. Something called the Corda. Box which is. Like a synthesized accordion, you can sound like a bunch of different instruments. Yeah, so between the cute little girls you know, in their little short skirts and everything. Because I was starting to. Notice all that. And the sound of the of the accordion I wanted to learn how to play well. I played and I was actually a state and national champion at one point and played until I got into high school and I realized. But playing the accordion would not get me laid. It would have the exact opposite effect, so I stopped playing. And as far as the art goes, well, I've never stopped with that. I started with the cartoons on Saturday mornings. Just, you know, sitting in front of the TV because I found that more fun than running around and climbing trees and \*\*\*\*, you know? I personally didn't like getting hurt. I like sitting there drawing, you know?

Ron Fortier

Oh, that's great.

Jim Charette

And it went from there. I mean, I went to. I ended up. Going to college because I wanted to be a better artist. I mostly wanted to do, you know, the cartoons and the graphics stuff until I went to college, and then I started to learn about the Fine Arts. So. I went to go. I started out of BC's in our transfer student and then went on to Swain cause I was. I admit Chuck Boucher and Dave Agii when I was there and Chuck went on to go to swing and he went to SMU and then to Swain or back and forth between the two. And so eventually I went to swimming too, because I wanted to know more about. Painting as far as doing the tattoos and everything else, I just. I love art. I've always loved art and and and it's all I've ever wanted to do. I've only ever wanted to be an artist and I look at writing and music and video and digital and cartooning and tattooing and painting. All the same to me. You know, it used to bother me that. I went off in so many different. Directions. You know what I mean? Like I. Would I'd be paint. Painting and say this way for a year and then tomorrow decide I want to do nothing but cartoons and then I get a job as a tattoo artist and I dropped everything else. But the painting for a long time. Because I could. Do that on the weekends. Oh, not well. I didn't have weekends when I was a tattoo artist. I had a day off here and there. So that's what. I did with my time off, though. I'd pee. Yeah. But I get into the tattooing because I got a tattoo and I said, well, that's pretty cool. I better learn. How to do this? Because I'm. It's going to cost me a lot of. Money. If I don't. And then I thought, well, yeah, I guess I could make some money doing it. And I learned on a, you know, I was learning on my. Brother and a few. Of my friends. And I worked with a guy who who somebody had at a tattoo parlor and he hooked me up with him. And I quit my job and I went to work there for the next 5. You know, it was that kind of thing. And and that always. Bothered me though, that I jumped around like that. But about a decade ago, I started searching through everything that I've ever done. You know, the videos, music, all, all of it. And I could. I finally found the point where it all connects so I don't feel bad about any of that anymore because it goes right back to that third grader who who wanted to do cartoons and make music. Yeah, if that makes any sense.



Ron Fortier

No it it it. It does. I I you know, I remember asking an uncle who was married four times, had ten children was a. Was one of the early Navy seals before there were ever Navy seals. He had a kind of a storied lifetime. I mean he.

Jim Charette

Oh, I knew a. Guy who was one of them too.

Ron Fortier

Really, he lied his way into the well.

Jim Charette

Yeah, yeah, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Ron Fortier

No, that's OK. I mean, he lied his way into the Navy before Pearl Harbor, and he arrived at Pearl Harbor. That we're still trying to figure it out. The morning of the attack and witnessed. But when he was, you know, in in, at a home and a nursing home because his mind started to go and and I asked him, I said, you know, Uncle Ernie, I said if you had a chance to do it all over again, would you? And he said absolutely. So I'm going to ask you this.

Speaker

Oh dear.

Ron Fortier

Would you do it all over again your whole life?

Jim Charette

But I had a chance to do it. All over the same. Way I do it the same way.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. Or would you change a couple of? Things, yeah.

Jim Charette

Well, you know, to be honest. With you I would, but there.

Ron Fortier

Would you do it all over again your whole life?

Jim Charette

But I had a chance to do it all over the same way.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. Or would you change a couple of things? Yeah.

Jim Charette

I do it the same way. Well, you know, to be honest with. You I would, but there are. A couple of small things that I. Means that would make a big difference now and one was I wouldn't have spent all that money I was making, all because I, you know, I would have played better. I I had no idea I was gonna meet my wife and and end up with a Step 5 amazing kids. You know, how I couldn't let that pass?



Ron Fortier

So far, but you know what? You've forced me to find work arounds and everything like that for that. I will be eternally grateful.

Jim Charette

Well, you know, that's exactly what happens in my studio.

Ron Fortier

Though yeah, I I I.

Jim Charette

Look at the world that way. I look at my life that way is is the combination of the chaos and order. Yeah. Always back and forth and in my life it's always been a struggle to fight between the two. Like when my life was chaotic, then my work. Very ordered. But then once I got my life under control, the work became very chaotic. Well, now, once I get my health issues, my life is chaos and order all the time. Because I have the chaos of the health problems, but I have the order of the medication and I have to do this and I got to do. That and I can't do this and I can't do that. And in the studio I finally let chaos just take over completely for a while, and I found the order. There. So it's. Yeah, it's it's random. It's that's to me. It doesn't matter what plans you make. The universe is constantly changing that up on you. It has other. Ideas and I'm OK with that. Now finally, you know, so that makes sense. A conversation to be like this.

Ron Fortier

Well, I tell you, I'm looking forward to more, more conversations in the future. You know, if we can get the the, the technical end, you know, get get the what you need to speak, you know to us to me without so much chaos but. Speaking, speaking, speaking.

Jim Charette

Well, yeah. I mean, I don't like to, I don't thrive on chaos all the time. You know.

Ron Fortier

Well, Speaking of chaos.

Jim Charette

I have. I have orderly. Chaos now, like I have the show, it's orderly chaos for me.

Ron Fortier

Orderly chaos, yeah. Speaking of chaos, I'm going to go back to one of the things I said in the beginning about you being pivotal or being the Forrest Gump. You know, being in the right place at the right time. And one of those things was and you know, I'm getting to was the the open studios and how you because. You don't keep your mouth closed when you feel. Screwed with.

Jim Charette

Jim is, as Jim knows.

Ron Fortier

So you know that whole thing I want to ask you. So tell us all about, you know, the Kilburn Mill, your time there. Bring in Luis feeling whoever from cola. Kolo, the whole thing. And that should that should keep us going for a bit and hopefully it.



Jim Charette

Right.

Ron Fortier

Doesn't cut out again.

Jim Charette

OK, well. As far as. The Kilburn went. I I moved up to New Bedford to to live with. You know my wife, my girl at the time and the kids. And when I got up there, I said, yeah, I'd. I'd like to get a studio around here somewhere. And just because of the art scene, you know? And I went. To the Kilburn. And I grabbed the studio and there were like a couple other guys up on the third floor that I really had no interaction with. You know, I didn't know there was anybody. Else there other than that. I had a studio and the summer that I was there, they were just talking about the open studio tours and I I said, well, I just opened my studio here. I should get involved in that and I tried to, but I was told I needed to pay to be a part of it. And I'm like to open my door, I I gotta pay you, you know, I to me, that didn't make sense. It was all about bringing artists, bringing people into the city. Alright, so you know I'm in a building and I'm an artist and I'm in New Bedford. I opened my door. Door, you know. So I said, well, I can advertise that. That's what they had told me. You're great for Flyers and et cetera. I said, well, I don't do much in the way of that because we have social media. And I've always had that punk rock ethic. Guerrilla advertising. I always did tons of flies all over the place. You know, so I. Was already doing that and I had been part of the whole, you know, the whole scene underground before. And it's word of mouth. And there's people in there. So I said, well, I'm going to do the unopened studio tour instead. And I invited 30 artists to come. And you know, I well, I invited a bunch of artists to come and, you know, set up in my studio because I had a studio. And and most of them didn't, so they wouldn't get soon. I wanted to. Bring them into. New Bedford to let people see them. You work too. You know, I was trying to. Help out so. What ended up happening was I talked with the the owners at the Kilburn and asked them about using the space that was next to me. Well, actually at first I asked if we could set up our site out in front of the building and they. Were OK with that. But then the manager, Peter, had said to me, well, we got 5000 square feet right next to you do. You want to use that. So we had, we had the perfect spot and I ended up with 30 artists coming in and a lot of them ended up renting space afterwards. But I told all of them just. Up so you work. I don't want any money from anybody. Just do your thing and make. What you can you know? And we had a blast that weekend. We we had such. A great time and everybody made money. And you know. But I \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\* a. Lot of people too. You know, I had the guys some ugly gallery come down. Tell me that you know, I was a radical and a rebel. And it's like, wow, this is.

Speaker

Yes you did.

Jim Charette

Great. And I'm like. Hey, I just I'm just trying to help out. Some of my friends. And half of the artists that. Showed up. I had. I didn't even know and I got to know them. I'm. I'm still friends. With them like. Brad, Eddie, you know, he came with two friends. And I had never even heard of him before because he was underground, working at his. Parent selves, you know, he ended up renting space at the Kilburn for a while. So I mean it it had it, you know the the factory itself was great to give us the space to use and at the same time it got something else going on in the building that I had no idea was going to happen. There were there were a whole bunch of people that rented space right away. So I had this little community of artists that. If I was having a hard time, I needed a break or whatever. I could go and we could hang out in the back, have a cigarette or whatever, you know, talk art. I can go into their studios. It was. Like being back in. School again, you know that end of it was great for me.

Ron Fortier

Now you also.



Jim Charette

As far as Louise. Louise came in after the fact, like we had already been doing all that stuff upstairs for a couple of years, and then he came in and he rented the the color color space downstairs. When they were doing kind of a second wave of rentals down there, they were trying to. You know, trying to clean up the spaces more the rest of us upstairs, we had the nasty old school Dirty studios and it was great. I mean, I make a mess when it. And I had told the guys that when I got there and he said Ohh, as long as they don't burn the building down. To what you. Want here and I you know, and we did. Yeah, they they had the. I'm sorry, what?

Speaker

You know.

Ron Fortier

The the the the thing about Louise coming in was, you know, the back story there is Louis was a bit of a rebel because he had an an \*\*\*\*\* show that really wasn't, you know, off the charts or anything like that. But some I'm not gonna be putting a title to someone in the community said that he had to put. Paper on his windows so that young children would. See it? It's not. It's not. It's not like it was next to a school or in a well traveled area. You know his studio. So he pretty much gave the finger to aha and and open studios and all these other things as well. And then he discovered that. His his, his studio, his uh his gallery was sold. Uh and he had to get out of there and ended up where you were. But then you came up with something that was quite interesting about the open studios. And I don't think you were saying that to be nasty to people who. Uh, you know, just with more fortunate than you are, right, uh. And it's basically saying, OK, what you've got faculty members in in these studios because that's the only way they can afford these is. I mean, they've got a nice paycheck and then they could afford to have a nice studio. And what about the rest of us?

Speaker

Right, right.

Jim Charette

Which I mean, I don't have any problem with any of those people either, though. I mean I I have. Respect problem because. They put the time in and they worked hard and you know they deserved right. You know, I was only trying to bring in people that didn't have that kind of money they could afford. I mean, if I. I couldn't have rented a studio in those buildings. I heard about. The Kilburn and I went there and you know. The price was. Right. Yeah, you know, and and I knew other people that were my friends and artists that obviously couldn't even afford, you know, a a space in any. Of those places, but. This was more in their ballpark. Some of them, you know, would go in together on the studio, things like that. Others used that actually for storage. And then half of it for studio space, you know?

Ron Fortier

But I think what you did is you pointed out a, a truism. You know, you, you, you, you, you, you, you pointed out a reality that there were other artists in the city besides people who had a professional career as instructors. And that was again a.

Speaker

Right.

Ron Fortier

A bad thing or a an angry thing, or a self a. Jealous thing? Yeah.

Speaker

I didn't get I.



Jim Charette

Didn't get angry. Well, I didn't get angry. About any of it until I because I said. Well, let's do it on the same weekend because they're already bringing people. To the city. So now they people that come in have something else to come check out. And I was called the parasite for doing that because they did it the same weekend. Yeah, that's when I started getting angry.

Ron Fortier

Well, a marketing.

Jim Charette

I did have a few of the people. That were on the Opus. Show up at it and they bought work and. I'm still friends with them. Yeah, you know.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Charette

I just didn't. I couldn't see how I was. Being a parasite. Now I'm I'm seeing like the elitist end of it, you know, and that's when I go.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, the marketing end of it is, is, you know you, you you grab your opportunities, you know it's it's changes, chaos and order, you know which is your your lifes theme. Wanna wrap this up? Believe it or not, and death gonna have you back on the show.

Jim Charette

Oh yeah. Yeah. Well, again, you know, it's like. I also I just let me say I I also don't mean to to say that you know I had an issue with Luis and what he did he he came in and he made a big difference, you know, for the building as well. I I know that he and I butted heads from the very first. Time I met him, he. Came. Excuse me. He came to the unopened studio tour that we did back in 2012 and he came in and I got 2. Not not a big argument with him, but yeah, you know how he can be very confrontational, right? Well. We've always been very confrontational too, so we butted heads, right? Away and I. Shook hands with them. You know he left because he said something about, like, the the high end of art, he says. And you don't like those people. Do you? I said. Where? The hell do you get that from? I. Never even said that you know. So then we started going back and forth from there, and then after he had moved in, we butted heads. A couple of times, but. I went through shows I I love some of the shows. That he set up down there and you know. We had. We ended up. Being friends you know, so I I don't want. I don't mean to like, take anything away from what he did by coming there the Coal coal gallery made a big difference there too, you know.

Speaker

Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I think if you will.

Jim Charette

I honestly I mean. I don't have a problem with anybody until they have a problem with me. Now I try not to be the \*\*\*\*\* anymore. I reserve the right to turn them loose on people that deserve it.



Ron Fortier

My point is.

Jim Charette

You know and.

Ron Fortier

My point is, Jim, that that you and he both were pivotal in, in, in a big couple of big swings in this in this Community and it's a theme I'd like to go back to. You know, I'm. I'm trying to get him on the show and he keeps saying nobody wants to listen. Nobody will listen. To me, who who?

Speaker

Who wants to listen? They. Well, I was.

Jim Charette

I was surprised why? Well, honestly, I was surprised you wanted to talk to me.

Ron Fortier

No, no. A long time I. Mean you will.

Speaker

I just I.

Jim Charette

Get up every day and do my. Work. You know what I mean?

Ron Fortier

Amazed me for. A long time and you know if if this is by way of writing the history. Book of the creative community. Then you're you're definitely a very important figure. And like I said, you know.

Jim Charette

Well, I I appreciate that.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I mean.

Jim Charette

I have my book coming out soon too.

Ron Fortier

Ohh, good, good, good, good.

Jim Charette

Yeah, it's called another day above the dirt and it's it's from notebooks and sketchbooks that go back 40 years. There's all kinds of crazy stuff in there.

Ron Fortier

Well, great. When it when it comes out, we got to get back together and and do that, you know, talk about it. Such Jim, if you know it's not gonna be a last interview. But you know, I asked you that question before about, you know, what you do live your life over differently. But here's a here's a final question. And and that is, how





would you like people to remember you?

Jim Charette

How would I like them to Remember Me? Yeah, I'm. I'm just Jim. I'd like them to Remember Me as a guy who got up every day and did his job. And my job is being an artist. I've spent most of my life doing just that. For a long time I said nothing. Nothing ever gets in the way of my art. And then I met my wife and I adjusted because now I have a family, and that means just as much to me as my art, you know? So I would like to be remembered as somebody that was kind of stubborn, insanely passionate about what he does, but could also change. I changed I I did everything I did in the past to fuel the art, and that included doing a lot of drugs, doing a lot. Lot of alcohol and doing a lot of other things that I probably shouldn't have, but I stopped doing all that so I can change.

Ron Fortier

There's, there's that old saying to thine own self be true. And I think you're a living example of that, Jim. Hey, thank you very much.

Speaker

Well, I appreciate.

Jim Charette

That because I try you. Know I do try to do that.

Ron Fortier

I thank you very much. I'll let you know how this all works out.

Speaker

Yeah, I hope.

Ron Fortier

And we've got.

Jim Charette

It I hope it came out nice cause again.

Ron Fortier

It was another great conversation I know well. We gotta get together for coffee or something at some point in time. In real life, you know? And with that. Yeah. And with that in mind, this is Ron Fortier, the host of the In Focus Podcast, brought to you by the South Coast artist.

Jim Charette

Oh, you have.

Ron Fortier

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