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Knife and Gun Clubs -- A blog by Luke Sommer Glenn

scene from the Blues Brothers good waltz. movie with the band playing in one of those bars with the chicken wire in front of the stage to protect the band. The places I cut my teeth playing live music were without the chicken wire. It wouldn't have saved the audience from us anyhow.

I was warned NOT to go! But these were the places in my small part of the world that had live music. The kind of music that I play. Every where I've travelled I've always been attracted to these places of ill repute and played music at most of them. The formula worked like this:

The first set was at the tail end of happy hour just before the day drinkers left, old guys that loved some Hank Williams, Ray Price and Ernest Tubb. I played those songs with my dad growing up and I love to make people happy. It's amazing how a sad old song can actually make you feel better somehow.

A lot of WW2 vets. Some of them were the guys that buckled the astronauts into the capsules that went to the moon, actual rocket scientists.



Most people remember the They loved the two step and a

By the start of the second set, all the construction guys are starting to get rowdy. The old fellers aren't there to complain about the volume any more. We play David Allan Coe, Hank Jr., Waylon and Willie kind of stuff. Outlaw Country they call it now as it seems everything has to be defined.

The dance floor would start to warm up as the fellas' old ladies would show up to eventually drag them out as they would get too sloppy to stand on their own. They've been up since 6AM working in the sun all day and that's about it for their endurance and alcohol level.

The third set marks the arrival of the post-dinner crowd. We throw out some easy to dance to songs like 'Keep Your Hands To Yourself! 'Takin' Care of Business' and 'Gimme Three Steps' kind of stuff.

Also known as the flatulence set. It's hard to sing on key when the air has been befouled by noxious ass gas. Everyone farts on the dance floor so they can blame it on the band, usually the bass player because he is associated with the bottom end and most of them look suspect anyway.

The last set is when the party is full on and the band is playing 'R.O.C.K. in the USA,' 'Mony Mony,' 'Crazy Train,' 'Highway to Hell'... start out hard core country, finish off hard rock. We didn't dare play disco. Pop 40 was played at the Holiday Inn in town.

The bands I played in back in those days would have fist fights or break over things like the other guitar player drinking up our pay or who effed up the arrangement or

timing of a song. We would play the next set pissed off and looking pretty rough but we'd be spot on.

Other times we'd all just be pathetically, shamefully drunk and kicking each other's ass over shit nobody remembers now. Southern Rock was our label. Every one is their own special brand of #\$%^ up. The skin head punk bands from up north called us "hair farmers." They didn't know how to tune a guitar but they were loud!

I've seen stabbings on the dance floor, "Damn! He didn't even get Three Steps," I would think to myself as the band played on. We only stopped playing if the power went out or the roof fell in (actually happened). If a fight got too close to the stage we repelled them by either kicking them back into the crowd or whacking them with a ten-pound Les Paul (quitar) in the head.

One packed night with the band wailing away I heard a strange zip, like a big ass, hyper sonic bee zoomed by my ear. I sing with my eyes closed a lot so I never saw what happened. Gun fire on the dance floor. A guy was taken to the hospital for a bullet wound. Nobody heard the sound of the gun over the band and the crowd never stopped dancing as it was shoulder to shoulder. A love triangle thing. Ain't love a bitch?

We dug the bullet out of the wall behind my mic stand. In a different reality or parallel universe that was my demise. Unfortunately for all of you in this reality I lived to sing off pitch and play wrong chords another day.

By the time the band got finished socializing and loading our gear it would be time to



hit the-24 hour Sambo's in Tite-ass-ville. The band guys are usually the tail end of the after bar closing time rush. It was a confluence of wasteoids from different worlds, all filling the jukebox with their preferred brand of noise.

These were the days of driving with open containers before the moms got mad.

Around 4AM the overwhelmed wait staff and lone short order cook are showing the "eff this" face, definitely not a good time to complain about your steak and eggs. Between rowdy drunks arm wrestling, chicks fighting in the bathroom over who pissed on the seat and the dude that left vegetable beef stew in the urinal, it's been a long

These also the days of small groups disappearing then reappearing with the same sinus issues.

I've found that people tend to find what they're looking for be it a fight or a good time. For some people a fight is a good time. Finding love is a whole 'nother complication entirely.

By 6AM the jukebox is still blaring away, filled with hours of paid for songs before someone turns it down for the Sunday morning, before church breakfast crowd. In their day a quarter was a good tip. The tables and floor look like a large party of toddlers ate there.

Such were the dives of our

Peace, Love, Happiness, Live long and Prosper.