Platform & Roosevelt Interview

Editor's Note: This interview was initially sent to Tim Kirkpatrick, James Glayat and Chris Irving at the same time back in September of 2009. Each member responded with their own version of the story. Bellow the interview, Tim Shaner offered a retrospective view on Platform, Roosevelt and his other bands. This interview was initially conducted to be posted on a 90's hardcore webzine (I don't have to tell you which one, I'm sure you can guess which one it is) but they thought it was beneath them to publish it. So here it is on the Abridged Pause Blog instead!

-Hey Tim, I was wondering if you would have some time to answer these few questions concerning Roosevelt?

> Tim: Wow! A Roosevelt interview 15 years after the fact. Sure, I'll try and answer your questions as good as my memory serves me from that time.

Platform demo, May 1993

-So Roosevelt formed in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida in October 1994. How did the band come about? Had any of you guys played together in a band before? I've heard on forums that Roosevelt was connected to a band named Platform, any relation?

Tim: Roosevelt was formed out of the ashes of like 10 other bands. Justin and Tim Shaner (brothers, guitar and vocals) and Chris Irving (bass) were in a band called Platform together. Platform broke up and those three formed Roosevelt with Chris's brother Jeff Irving on drums. So the band was made up of 2 pairs of brothers at the beginning. After a few months, tension was high with Jeff, so he left and I joined and James Glayat came in as a 2nd guitarist. James and I were formerly in a scrappy little punk band called "Shaft" (our 1st band ever). The members of Roosevelt were Justin Shaner, Timothy Shaner, Timothy James Kirkpatrick, James Thomas Glayat and Thomas Christopher Irving.

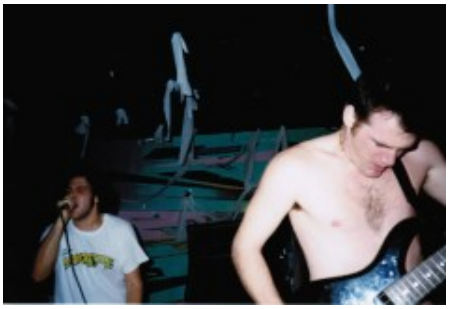
James: That's right. Sunny Palm Beach County. If I had to give it an exact birth place I'd have to say Palm Beach Gardens High School, somewhere between second and third period, when Justin Shaner asked Tim Kirkpatrick and I to come out and play with him. Justin, his older brother Tim Shaner, and Chris Irving from Platform were looking to replace their drummer, add a guitar player, and change names. This was a typical Shaner maneuver. Replace one member, change names, write new songs. I don't mean that in a bad way, of course, I just mean Justin never stopped moving. Tim K. and I had been in a band together in the past and since we were huge Platform fans, it just all sort of fell into place. Platform was, as far as I know, Palm Beach Gardens' only hardcore band at the time. Before that I think there was Deal With It, but that was Tim Shaner and Justin Shaner too.

Chris: Yeah 1994 prior to that Justin [Shaner] (guitar) and

> Tim [Shaner] (vocals) brothers always had something going on. I was playing bass in a typical South Florida Death Metal band, so Justin and Tim and a few other local hardcore kids asked me to mess around with them. At the time I hated it, hardcore seemed so basic, but because we were all best friends I tucked my long hair under a hat and we started a band called “Deal With It”. DWI, had songs about unity, fighting, some straight edge. At the time Justin, Tim and Aaron were straight edge, I wasn’t yet. Tim played drums in DWI but wanted to sing, so we found a drummer, Mason (a skinny little sxe punk rock kid with a kit) and started Platform. Platform was a bit different because, we added another singer to the mix, Derek Warren. By this point I drank my last beer and took the lifelong vow of straight edge. Platform was Tim Shaner on vocals, Derrek Warren on vocals, Chris Irving on bass, Justin Shaner on guitar and Mason Youell on Drums.

James Glayat provided me the following pictures of Platform.

Platform, circa 1994



Platform, circa 1994

Platform, circa 1994

Platform, circa 1994

Platform, circa 1994

Platform, circa 1994

-Who came up with the name, and why?

Tim: I think that one of the Shaner bros. came up with the name, or maybe Chris did. Not too much thought behind it I don't think. Maybe Chris liked Pres. FDR and his wife, or maybe we just wanted to be like the bands Lincoln and Hoover.

James: Hmmm…. I think it was Tim Shaner. And no we didn't know there was a band out there called "Roosevelt's Inaugural Parade". Why? To be honest, I have no idea. You could blame it on the fact that we were all big Lincoln and Hoover fans. But that sounds so fucking lame… Could be true though, I honestly don't remember. That would be the embarrassing version.

Chris: At about this time bands like Culture and other harder metal hardcore bands hit the South Florida scene. Platform dropped the second singer and changed the name to Roosevelt (most environmentally sensitive US president and he had a cool name, I wish it were deeper.

-In the booklet of the EP, it is mentioned to be printed on soy/vegetable oil. Was the band vegan? Were any members

straight-edge?

Tim: When you say “EP”, I’m not sure if you’re referring to our demo-tape or our 7″ but… Our friend Derek Warren put out the demo for us and printed everything. He was probably just going for the sustainable option with the ink and such. A couple of us were straight edge and vegan, some smoked weed and were vegan, and some ate doughnuts and smoked weed. Our friend Andrew Chadwick put out our 7″.

James: There’s no simple answer there. At that period in my life, the world around me, the music scene based world, was always subject to so much change that from one week to another it’s hard to say who was what when. That being said, yes there were times when I think everyone was both drug free and vegetarian/vegan and times when people were eating and doing all sorts of shit. I know Tim Kirkpatrick is still to this day vegan, and Chris is to this day still straight edge. The soy ink thing? I’d ask Damien [Moyal] about that or John Philips. That might have been his call. I don’t think I would have cared one way or the other back then.

Chris: Yeah. Justin, Tim S. and I were edge but after some time Justin and Tim S. felt it wasn’t for them anymore. I still was VERY edge so I felt compelled to leave.

Roosevelt playing live, circa 1995. Notice Damien Moyal in front row

Roosevelt playing live, circa 1995

-Your first release was a (5-6) songs cassette demo. How many of these copies were made and did all these songs eventually make it on your other releases? Did you work with Jeremy Staska from the start on the production?

> Tim: I don’t remember how many demos we made, probably around 200 or so. We would just kinda make like 25 per show and bring them in a shoebox. None of those songs ever made

it further than the demo. We actually wrote songs rather quickly, as Justin Shaner is a riff-machine, so I feel like every few months we had 4 new songs that would phase out the old ones.That demo was recorded by this dude Will that played in an awesome band called “Drop” from West Palm Beach. Probably one of my favorite bands from south Florida. We recorded it in Justin’s bedroom. We hooked up with Jeremy for the stuff we recorded after the demo [April 1995]. It was a big step up for us cause he had an actual studio with a live room and isolation booths.

James: The demo, holy shit. I have no idea. I’m racking my brain right now and I can’t even remember what songs where on that thing. From the start? No. Only on the stuff that came out on the Culture split and the 7”. I don’t really remember who recorded the demo, only that we did it in Justin’s bedroom and that I played like shit.

Chris: The demo was actually recorded in my apartment by some recording engineer students on a 4 track. I think I dubbed 50 copies on my home stereo (DIY). Fortunately, the demo got out and people liked it. Because we were all really close with the Culture (Miami) scene we joked about a split with the wimpy emo-Roosevelt and ubber tough guy Culture. In my mind it made sense because it was a good representation of what was going on in the South Florida scene. We all walked and rocked together. Culture worked exclusively with Jeremy Staska in Fort Lauderdale. It was a dope studio for a decent price so we went with him!

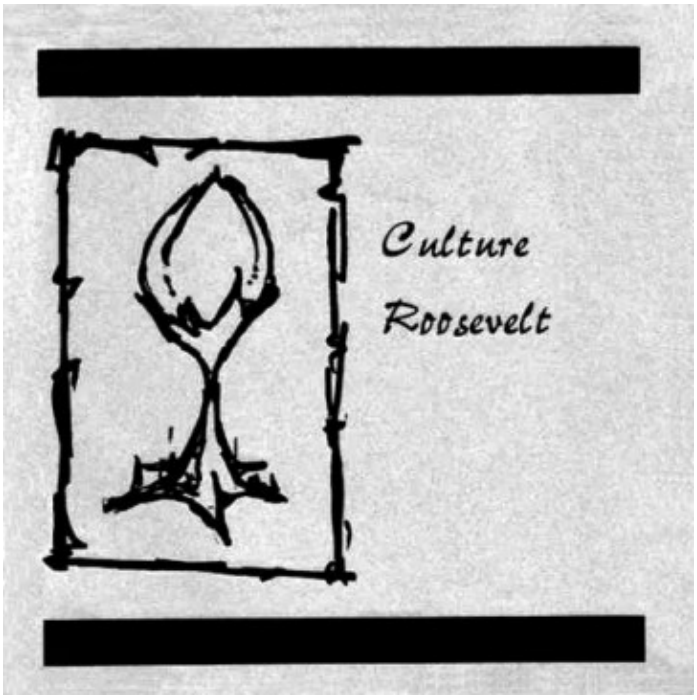
-You then released a split with Culture on Intention Records. How did that come about? It was the labels first release. Was Jon Philips active in the local hardcore scene?

Tim: At first that split was supposed to be a comp with tons of FL bands on it [including Roosevelt, Culture, Tension, Afterall]. Long story short, us and Culture were the only bands that actually recorded a song for it so it became a

split 7″. I don’t think that we would have done it had it originally been proposed to us as a split w/ Culture. Not because we had anything against them, but we recorded 3 other songs in the session for the comp and we would of rather just had our own 7″ out. It ended up working out really well, though, because it was 2 drastically different bands on one single. We met Jon from playing a bunch of shows up in Melbourne. He played in other bands that we played with and he was just starting his label at that time.

James: Good old John Philips. John had played guitar in (a guitar I now own mind you) in this band Afterall and this other band Uplipht. I loved his guitar playing. As much as I loved Justin’s. Also in those bands, on drums, Dave Lablue from The Mercury Program and Textural. He also went on to play bass in the band that came after Roosevelt, Burgundy [Burgundy and “The Burgundy Romance” were different bands, although both Dave Lebleu and Justin Shaner part of them]. I wasn’t in that one. I got “Shanered” out of it. I don’t recall who offered who or what at the time but I was a big Culture fan and they were our friends. I was just stoked to be putting out a record, of any length, with anyone.

Chris: Jon Phillips kinda came out of nowhere. He hung out with the Culture entourage. At that point he wanted to start his label so he asked us to do a split. We agreed and it happened.



Culture / Roosevelt split 7″ (First press, May 1995, Intention Records)

Culture / Roosevelt split 7″ (Second press, 1996, Intention Records)

-That split had two different versions. One of them had a picture of a flower on white paper, while the other had a picture on young miners on beige paper. Can you recall why this was so and how many copies of each were made?

Tim: The one with the miners was the 1st pressing (or maybe just the 1st pressing of just the cover). No idea how many copies were made of each.

James: I don't have my records with me right now so I can't look and tell you, but I really don't even know if that would help. I don't really remember, sorry.

-The split mentions the song was recorded in April 1994, yet on the EP, it says the band was formed in October 1994. Who handled the artwork?

James: Probably pressing error. Probably my fault. I think I did the layout for that thing in the front seat of my car at a show at the Old School House in Vero Beach. I think I had to turn it in that night and glue sticking everything together by dashboard light and fucked something up. I'm sorry history, my bad.

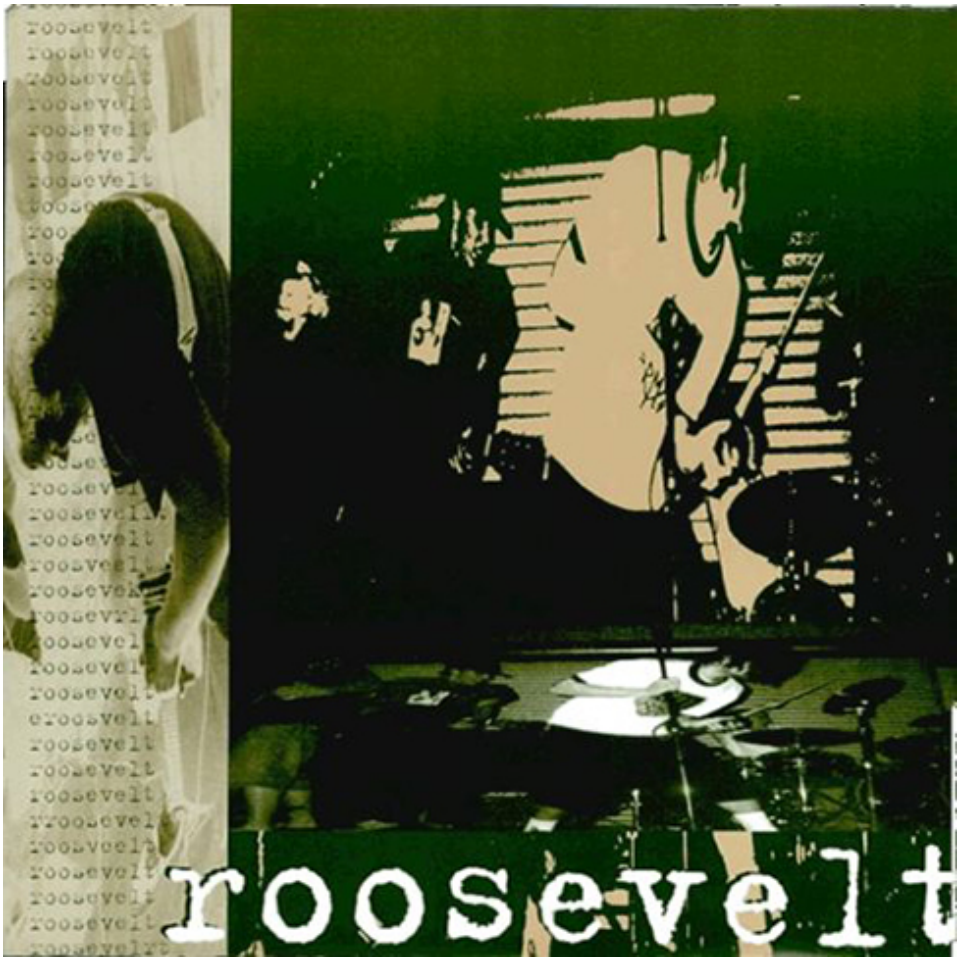
-Did you tour for the split, or played any shows with Culture? Did the band have any merch at the time?

Tim: We played a bunch of shows all over Florida, which back then driving over to Tampa to play a show was a big deal to us. We played lots of shows with Culture and also with other great bands from Florida and beyond, including Reversal of Man, Strongarm, Falling Forward and Split Lip. We made some patches and stickers here and there, but never any shirts.

James: I think we had patches. I think Tim K. and I silk-screened patches. Maybe stickers? We didn't tour. But there was a period of time when we were playing so many shows up and down the east coast of Florida that it felt like it. Pretty much every town within 100 miles of Palm Beach Gardens got a Roosevelt show if it had more than ten punk rock kids in it. We loved playing with Culture. They brought out the crazy hardcore kids from Miami.

Chris: In South Florida we were very fortunate to have a

club called the Foundation which basically let us (the hardcore scene) do as we pleased. As a result Roosevelt, Culture, played every week-end. Our scene grew huge, suddenly this little garage band from Palm Beach Gardens, merged with the larger Miami scene. As a result, we ended up playing a lot and recorded a demo in my living room. Deal With It, Platform, Roosevelt, The Porchfront Chat and Burgundy- all were basically the three of us Justin, Tim and Chris.



Roosevelt EP, Boxcar Records, January 1996

-You then hooked up with Andy from Boxcar Records to release your self-titled 7″ EP. This was released in 1996 I believe, and the band had already broken up, as stated in the booklet. How was the release and reception of the EP at the time of its release? It was actually pressed twice, so I assume it sold rather well even if the band was not doing any shows or

promotion.

Tim: Yeah, I think he planned on pressing that before we broke up and it just took way longer than expected to get pressed. We were young and stupid so of course we broke up. I don't even remember why. By the time the record came out most of the band had moved all over the place and at the time there was no music scene in our town so it's hard to say how the reception was.

James: Andrew Chadwick had been friends with us for a long time by then, just from going to shows and whatnot. He's a great guy. Haven't seen him in a few years, but we stay in touch. By 1996 Roosevelt was long since dead. Tim K., Justin and I were graduating from High School, Chris had gotten married (still together too!). Like I said earlier, at that point of time in our lives, everything was subject to such rapid change. We had all moved on to other bands that had burned themselves out as well. As far as how many copies were made? How many were sold to who? I haven't the foggiest.

Chris: Boxcar! Yeah, we were really into Split Lip, Unbroken, Texas Is The Reason and Boxcar was the only label interested in not doing the trendy chunk chunk metal hardcore. So we signed with him and he really believed in the band. But the band's differences in direction was getting the best of us. I was really getting politically motivated in straight edge while Justin, Tim S., Little Tim K. (drummer) and James were almost against it-being punk against punk? So I think I was voted out. But Boxcar wanted to release it anyway.

-Who wrote the lyrics to the songs? How was the song writing process? Were some more involved in composing then others?

Tim: Tim Shaner wrote all the lyrics. Justin was kinda the riff monster. He would come in with tons of stuff and we'd

all kinda just arrange it together. I would say that Justin probably did 50% of the writing, James and Chris would bring a bunch of stuff to the table, too.

James: Tim Shaner wrote the lyrics, maybe Justin did too, not sure. I know I didn't, Tim K. didn't. As far as the composing of the songs, I'd say it was 60/40 Justin to James ratio with heavy editing by Tim K. Tim K. and I have been in a lot of bands together over the years (As Friends Rust, Moments In Grace) and aside from being one of the best drummers on earth, he's a great song-smith. Justin was one of my favorite guitar players at the time. I loved Platform and was super flattered that he wanted to play with me. He was the first in a long line of guitar players that I've played with that were FAR better than me, and in turn, forced me to be better.

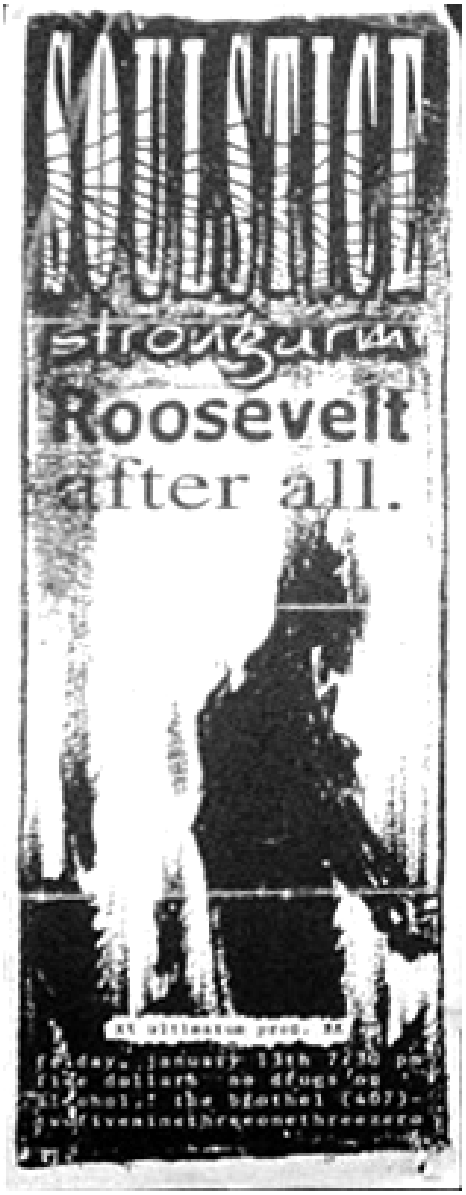
Chris: Justin wrote all the guitar riffs, I wrote most melodies on bass and Tim S. exclusively wrote lyrics. I think it worked because we were all so different that when it synthesized it was music. Essentially Justin would show up at a practice with some riffs, he would play them over and over, the drummer and I would improvise along with him while Tim recorded it all on a boom box, take it home and write the lyrics. Next practice we had a song!

-A lot of the pictures from the releases are about blue collar works and young miners. What was the bands view on this, or the point trying to be made?

Tim: I mean, I'd like to give you a great explanation, but really were were just a grungy kinda band and the artwork on the few things we released kinda reflected what the music sounded like. We would pretty much just give the recording to whoever was designing the cover and tell them to make what comes to mind by listening to the songs.

James: I don't think there was any message there. We weren't

a political band, we were more personal. I think Tim Shaner was trying to write about experiences personal to him that he felt others could identify with. But you'd have to ask him. I don't think I picked out that photo.



January 13th 1995 at The Brothel in Florida. Roosevelt, After All, Strongarm and Soulstice.

April 1st 1995 at The Brothel, Roosevelt played with Sense Field, Falling Forward and Discount

-What led the band to break up or move on in September 1995? It was so short lived, but yet still to this day people discovering your music are impressed. How do you look back on your music?

Tim: I seriously don't remember why we broke up. We were young and constantly evolving musically in different ways. People butted heads and were difficult with each other. We broke up and split into 2 other bands: "Burgundy" and "Flat Earth".

James: I'm sure it was related to either some inter-band

politics or something. I just remember being told “we’d broken up” after a show at the Old School House and at that moment the handle on my guitar case broke off and my guitar fell in the dirt. Within two months I was in some band called Flat Earth with Chris’ brother [Jeff] and we were playing shows with Burgundy. Whatever the reasons were for the break up, it never affected my friendship with any of the other guys. I live in NY now, in Brooklyn. Dave Lablue, who also lives up here, said he just saw a copy of the Culture split in some record store in Williamsburg. That makes me happy. It was all so long ago, and had I any idea that that recording would still be floating around today, I would have tried to play better. But it makes me happy that something I did so long ago is still out there. Somewhere. It might me fodder for the record bin, but its proof that I was.

Chris: After I was voted out, everyone kinda started there own projects. Burgundy started with Justin and Tim S. I rejoined them in The Porchfront Chat. I love the music, it was honest, raw and sincere. I listen too it from time to time however, it is a bit dated now. To be honest, we are surprised of the recent interest in the band.

-Was the band featured on any compilations, or had any merch made during its lifespan?

Tim: As far as I know we just have the demo, the split, and the 7″.

James: I think we may have been on some comp that Andrew Chadwick put out. I’d ask him. As far as other merch? Nope. Patches, I think Tim K might have one still.

-Was there ever any planned releases that didn’t happen?

Tim: No. We had a good amount of songs but no $ to put them out. I think had we been around longer we would have released more stuff.

James: We might have written a few songs that never saw the light of day, but they're long since lost.

-Finally, would you be able to recall all the bands you've done before and after Roosevelt?

Tim: Damn, I've played in a bunch. I'll give you the ones that I actually played more than 1 show with (that I can remember): Shaft, Roosevelt, As Friends Rust, Argentina, Ithaca, Swayze, Keith Welsh and Moments in Grace.

James: As Friends Rust (with Tim Kirkpatrick and Damien Moyal from Culture), Moments In Grace (with Tim K. again), GATORS! (my current band, oddly enough with Dave Lablue and Peter Bartsocas from Bird of Ill Omen, another Damien Moyal band).

Chris: Since the split, I moved to Gainesville and played in Red Roses For A Blue Lady (the favorite of all my bands). Today I live in Asheville, NC. I am a graduate student studying to be a special education teacher. In 2003 I suffered a massive stroke that destroyed my left hand. So NO Roosevelt or Red Roses reunions until stem cell to repair brain damage. But that's another diatribe.

-I had the chance to speak with Tim Shaner about the history of Platform and Roosevelt as well as the other bands him and his brother were in. Here is what he had to say

"Deal With It" didn't turn into "Platform". Deal With It was formed in 1991. The line up for the band consisted of Aaron? on vocals, Justin [Shaner] on guitar, Chris [Irving] on bass and Tim [Shaner] on drums. Deal With It was old school hardcore. We would do covers of Youth of Today, No For An Answer and Judge. We started to become more influenced by newer 90's hardcore and changed the name of the band to "Omission". Omission didn't really go anywhere and we split up. Some of the later Deal With It /Omission songs ended up on the Platform demo.

Sometime around 1992 or early 1993 Justin [Shaner] and Chris [Irving] formed a band called “Strapdown”. This band consisted of Justin Shaner on guitar, Chris Irving on bass, Derek Warren on vocals and Mason Youell on drums. At this time I wasn’t doing anything musically. My memory is a little fuzzy on this part but at some point I joined Strapdown as a second singer. So I think Strapdown played one or two shows with Derek and I on vocals. Derek left the band and that’s when Platform was born. In May of 1993 we recorded the Platform demo with a friend of ours on a 4 track recorder. Platform played it’s last show in March of 1994.

Shortly after this we started a new band with myself on vocals, Justin [Shaner] on guitar, Chris [Irving] on bass and Jeff [Irving] on drums. We went by the name of “Bench Warmer” and played one show with this line up. Jeff left the band and this is when James [Glayat] and Tim [Kirkpatrick] joined. Shortly after this line up was in place, I came up with the name “Roosevelt”. Roosevelt recorded the demo in December of 1994 on a 4 track in our rehearsal space, my bedroom. I think we played our first show in January of 1995. We were approached by Intention Records about contributing a song to a Florida compilation 7″ record. The bands on the comp were going to be Roosevelt, Culture, Afterall and Tension. I am not sure what happened next, only that the comp turned into the Roosevelt/Culture split seven inch. We recorded four songs. The remaining 3 songs came out on the Roosevelt seven inch on Boxcar Records in January of 1996.

“Burgundy” was formed shortly after Roosevelt disbanded. The line up for Burgundy was Justin Shaner on guitar, Tim O’Donnell on drums, Tim Shaner on vocals and Dave Lebleu on bass. We recorded a 6 song demo sometime in late 1995 or early 1996, not quite sure. This band did not last very long. The next thing that we did was “The Porchfront Chat”

the line up was Justin Shaner on guitar, Chris Irving on bass, Tim Shaner on vocals and Dave Lebleu on drums and trumpet. This band never officially recorded anything, though there are some recordings. This band broke up around January of 1997.

Download the full Platform and Roosevelt discography The Shaner brothers now play in Blood in a Box: listen here