

**Announcer:** Welcome to Hancock Conversations, an Allan Hancock College podcast. Join President Dr. Kevin G. Walthers and members of the Hancock community as they explore the stories behind the people and places that make Allan Hancock College the unique hub for learning that it is today. You're sure to learn something new and even have a little fun along the way.

**Dr. Kevin Walthers:** Hello! Welcome to Hancock Conversations. I'm Kevin Walthers, superintendent/president here at Allan Hancock College. Hancock Conversations is your podcast for all things Allan Hancock College, and today we're joined by a very special guest, special to me in particular, Bobby Martinez, also known as Bobby Been Fresh. He's been making and releasing rap music since he was in high school. He's kind of an old school gangster rapper and incorporates newer sounds through his extensive catalogue. He was recently featured in "Underground" magazine. I have a copy of that, and it's fantastic. Bobby is also a Hancock alumnus and has his associate degree and a certificate in sound production. Welcome to the podcast, Bobby.

**Bobby Martinez:** Thank you for having me.

**KW:** So, maybe, I should be calling you Mr. Been Fresh.

**BM:** Not yet, not yet.

**KW:** Not yet. Okay, so Bobby Been Fresh is your stage name and how you have been performing. Give us a little sense of how you got started doing performances.

**BM:** You know, I kind of just took an interest into music towards the end of high school. And I went to college in the Bay Area as well, I attended San Francisco State University for a little bit. I decided that wasn't for me and I came back home. And when I came back home, I just realized, you know, that I wanted to take my music more serious and pursue it. And I had rapped for some people in the Bay Area, and they liked it. Everyone that I rapped for would come up and tell me that they liked my style and my music. So, when I came back home I was like wow, you know, I was in a whole other city and a bigger city and not where I'm from, and they liked it, so it just inspired me to want to take it further, really.

**KW:** So, you know I listened to your first album. I've got a copy of your albums and that first one, I remember you talking about growing up on the mean streets of Grover Beach. Does Grover Beach really give you the street cred you need to be a rapper?

**BM:** I don't think you need street cred per se but it's, you know, that's my story. You know, there's good and bad things in every city, I think.

**KW:** Right. when you were first starting this out, were you just kind of sitting in your bedroom in high school and then in your dorm room at San Francisco State? How did you start laying down your first songs?

**BM:** The first songs that I ever did, a friend of mine gave me his old equipment, and you know he was older and he started a family and had a job and you know he decided that he wasn't going to pursue music, and he let me borrow his equipment. And so, I used his equipment. I

kept it at a friend's house and I would just go to my friend's house and record there, and that's kind of how it all started and eventually, I just saved up money to buy my own equipment. And I bought my own equipment. I set up a little studio in my house. And I just started writing and started recording.

**KW:** And what did your mom and dad think about that?

**BM:** I think at the time, they didn't necessarily know how passionate I was about music, but once they saw how serious I was saw me really dedicate my time to it, you know they said, "Wow, he really wants to do this," and it wasn't just like some phase or something like that. They really saw that I have a love for it, you know. They became more supportive as time went on.

**KW:** That's awesome. And now I mean, I know your parents and I know they're also your biggest fans, right?

**BM:** Yeah, they are, most definitely.

**KW:** Tell me, you know you're talking about equipment, what kind of equipment do I need if I want to be if I want to start my own rap career?

**BM:** Now you just need a laptop and a recording program, and a microphone, and you're set.

**KW:** That's it?

**BM:** That's all you need.

**KW:** Ah man. What did you start with? What kind of equipment did you have when you started?

**BM:** I have a MacBook Air. And I have a microphone, it's an Audio Technica 2020, and I have two JBL speakers. And primarily what I use, I have the program Pro Tools installed on my MacBook. My first, I was using GarageBand which is like the program that comes already installed in a MacBook. And I would just buy beats, like there's online website where you can purchase beats, to make your own in GarageBand, and I was just doing that and recording myself.

**KW:** So, when you perform and before the pandemic hit you were kind of getting a little bit of a reputation around the Central Coast, you're getting the performances at some showcases. What do you take with you to perform, is it just your MacBook and you're good to go?

**BM:** No, I hire a DJ to run all the sound. And I just have files that are made for the show, so I have files with all the words on it, and then I have stage mixes which are just a hook on there, that way I can perform the rest of the song live. And I just take those files and give them to the DJ and, you know, he works the sound for me.

**KW:** Nice. So, you were here at Hancock as you were kind of starting that out. How'd your time at Hancock help you become a better musician?

**BM:** I learned basic skills on Pro Tools at Hancock. Going through the music program, I had Dr. Engelmann as a teacher, and he was really a great teacher. I believe he's no longer with the school, but the basic things I learned in those classes, I still apply today, just how to edit my songs, those skills I use every day.

**KW:** And you should know that Marcus Engelmann he taught for years, he's retired. It's not something horrible happened to him. So, tell me about this "Underground" magazine thing, that seems like a big deal.

**BM:** Yeah, it's been a great experience, you know, this helped me reach a new market and gain new fans and supporters. They reached out to me in July of 2020, and they pitched their message about what they were about, and furthering the music community in the Central Coast. And that was what I was already trying to do, so it made sense for me to want to build with them.

**KW:** Right, and there were a whole host of rappers on there. Were those people you knew before, or is that some folks that you just now get to know?

**BM:** I had never met them before that, the way that I met them was the day we took the photo for the cover, actually.

**KW:** Any collaboration opportunities coming out of that?

**BM:** Yeah, today, actually, I released the song with one of the other artists featured on the magazine, his name is Chris the Thrillist. And we have a new song out today.

**KW:** What's it called?

**BM:** It's called "Not for Nothing."

**KW:** Alright. And where would somebody find that that song if they wanted to go check it out?

**BM:** You can find it on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, everywhere music is sold online. Amazon, Napster, Instagram music, I'm everywhere.

**KW:** Nice. And they just put in Bobby Been Fresh, which is spelled b-e-e-n Fresh. They put that in the search you'll pop right up, right?

**BM:** Yes.

**KW:** And so how many full-length albums have you put together so far?

**BM:** Eight.

**KW:** Eight. That's pretty incredible. And then, so the same thing if somebody wants to find those albums, they just go check it out?

**BM:** Yeah, only three are available right now. The older ones, I took down. The older ones aren't available on online, but there's three available right now.

**KW:** So, you're doing some live streaming shows right now during the pandemic. How are those going?

**BM:** Those have been really good. It's been a way to connect, even though there aren't get-togethers and gatherings, you know, social distancing, all these rules in place. It's been great to still be able to connect with fans and people who support me. I think it's much-needed, just because everyone wants to have some fun, and right now there's not a lot of outlets to go out, so you can go out from the comfort of your home now.

**KW:** That's perfect. That's perfect. So, if there's somebody else who really wanted to break into this kind of world, what would you tell them to do?

**BM:** I would say don't be afraid to fail. I think a lot of artists I talk to now that are thinking about starting, they're just scared to try and scared of what people think, but you shouldn't let people with opinions stop you from trying to do what you want to do, you just have to go for it, and see how it goes, you know. And music nowadays, there's so many fans out there, someone is gonna like your music. Someone is going to like it, you just have to find the people that are interested in it and pitch it to them. That's what I do.

**KW:** And I'm guessing it takes a little bit, a while to kind of find your footing, too, right? I'm here to say it's not like you can roll out your first song or do your first performance and you're a way better rapper and songwriter than you were 10 years ago, right?

**BM:** Of course, yeah, of course.

**KW:** Just keeping at it is really important.

**BM:** Yeah, staying consistent, and you know, presenting your music in a creative way to get people's attention, and just keep trying, you know, keep trying and keep trying to find the people who are interested in your music. I think what helped me is, I just found my niche in the hip-hop world. And so, every time I put out a song or album, those people are the first ones I'm going to pitch it to, because I know they'll like it already. So, and also just find your community. You know, in every field of work there's a community of people that appreciate it and support it, and I think it's easier to have success if you're in that community as well.

**KW:** So, you know, one of the things that I've always enjoyed about your songs is the fact that you're writing your own music and your own songs, and how does that writing process work for you?

**BM:** A lot of my music is based on personal experience, so you know, I like to just live my life and it drives me to write a song. You know, I just get my notebook and pick a beat and let it flow. I don't really know how to explain it.

**KW:** Do you ever just take a quiet time and sit down and just think about things that you want to talk about, and maybe put those down to writing sessions?

**BM:** Yes.

**KW:** So you know I'm more familiar, because you know I'm an old guy, so I'm more familiar with how songwriting happens, you know, in Nashville and they have people that that's their whole job is to sit in a room, and write songs and you hear them talking like, "Oh yeah, I got with my friend and they, you know, we just sat in the room and kind of bounce ideas off each other and we came up with a song." Is that the kind of stuff you're doing?

**BM:** Yeah, a lot of it happens by myself, but if I do get together with people, that's usually how it happens too.

**KW:** So, what's your big hope for when the pandemic ends, where are you going to perform first?

**BM:** First, I would like to perform here at home, Santa Maria or Five Cities, then Santa Barbara, then LA, and then up to the Bay. That was the plan before the pandemic hit. So, I still hope to continue that plan afterwards. We'll get there soon.

**KW:** So, if you had a chance to be an opening act for anybody, who would you be the opening act for?

**BM:** Wow, Jay Z.

**KW:** Might as well start at the top, right?

**BM:** Yeah, very top, very top of the list.

**KW:** So, you know, in this pandemic you've had time on your hands, have you been designing your own tour bus?

**BM:** No, not a tour bus. I dream about it though.

**KW:** Yeah, what's gonna be on your tour bus?

**BM:** Um, a picture of my face. [Laughing] Let them know who's in there.

**KW:** That's helpful, because you'll see those tour buses going up and down the highway back in the day, and you wonder who's in there? You'll know hey, there's Bobby Been Fresh's bus.

**BM:** Yeah, hopefully with a trail of fans behind it too.

**KW:** There you go. That's it, it could be the Bobby Been Bus. I like that. You can have that for free.

**BM:** That's a great idea. Thank you.

**KW:** Well cool, Bobby, it's exciting, and I can't tell you how proud we are of what you've done, not just with your career, but your life. And you know I met you when you were still in high school, and to see you blossom in this way, and to really get some recognition for your hard work, is really touching to me. And, you know, I truly believe that one day that bus is gonna go by and I will be going, "Hey, I know that guy."

**BM:** Thank you, that means so much to me, and it means a lot that you would sit down and have a conversation with me. I appreciate your time and yeah, you know, I feel like I'm already winning, you know, everything I ever wanted out of music, I have it right now. So, my focus is just trying to grow all these experiences and connections. And I'm really in it to make them meaningful and have positive impact, that was my goal, and to inspire and motivate, and I've been able to do all those things. And, I'm just so appreciative of everyone that's listened to my music, and I'm just trying to go as far as possible to show other people that they can do it as well.

**KW:** Bobby, thanks for joining us. We're excited to see a Hancock alum having some success. And for those of you listening, just Google up at Bobby Been Fresh, it's spelled B-e-e-n, as easy as that. Bobby's Been Fresh and he's on all the social medias, and you'll be able to hear some really good music, and something that you can relate to here, especially for those of us who live here on the coast. Thanks for being with us, Bobby, and we wish you well.

**BM:** Thank you so much.

**KW:** Alright, this has been Hancock Conversations, your podcast for all things Allan Hancock College. I'm Kevin Walthers, and we look forward to seeing you on our next show.