

# [***Clive Davis reflects on the music he and Whitney Houston were planning before her sudden death***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7N-T0D1-JBSS-S026-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Legendary music producer Clive Davis remembers too well when Whitney Houston [*suddenly died*](https://www.cnn.com/2012/02/11/showbiz/whitney-houston-dead/index.html) over Grammys weekend 12 years ago.

"It was painful. First of all, it was shocking. I had been with her 48 hours earlier," Davis recalled in an interview with CNN this week.

The superstar singer was set to attend Davis' annual pre-Grammys gala the night of her death, when she was found in a bathtub at the Beverly Hilton Hotel where the party would be held hours later.

Decades before the tragedy, the Grammy-winning producer discovered Houston as a teenager in New Jersey and helped catapult her to what would become an unparalleled career. Davis and Houston remained close throughout her life. He said the singer told him she felt she had beat her struggles with addiction and was ready to get back into the studio to record new music.

"She knew I couldn't believe that she was still smoking cigarettes," Davis said. "And she showed me she had given up smoking. She had gone to some kind of throat doctor to remove all the nicotine from her throat. This was February."

Davis said that just days before she died, Houston asked if he could come up with new material for new music.

"We scheduled that we'd be ready," he recalled. "That's the way we worked. We collaborated and met before any recording session with material. And we said, 'Yeah, she'll go in August.' So she was vital, optimistic. Looking forward to the future. That's the lethal power of drugs. You never beat it. She didn't beat it."

Despite the distressful news of [*Houston's death*](https://www.cnn.com/2012/04/04/showbiz/whitney-houston-toxicology/index.html) that day, the event went forward to create a space for [*guests to mourn*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7E2hQ-Yld8I).

"I called her family. I said, 'Look, this was her favorite party. We have to celebrate her,'" Davis reminisced. "We've got to not only celebrate her life, but also provide a peaceful haven for the mourners to be together and not feel alone. We agreed to go on and celebrate her life and her unique talent with the music that she loves so much."

This weekend, Davis will host his party, once again, which began in 1976 and still reigns supreme as the most exclusive soiree of the biggest weekend in music. Nearly 50 years after Davis started his Grammys party with the help of Barry Manilow - whose career he also help to launch - the gala is still attended by a who's who of Hollywood, sports and ***politics***.

Davis told CNN that Jay-Z and [*Beyonce*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/26/entertainment/beyonce-renaissance-movie-preview-cec/index.html) are confirmed to attend on Saturday, as are Nancy Pelosi, Tom Hanks and Chris Rock.

"It's scrutinized to make sure that there's no audience like this in the world," Davis said.

Over his incredible career, Davis has helped shape iconic musicians across genres, signing the likes of Janis Joplin, [*Bruce Springsteen*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/01/entertainment/bruce-springsteen-mother-song-death/index.html), Billy Joel, Aerosmith, Santana, Pink Floyd, Aretha Franklin and Alicia Keys, in addition to Manilow and Houston.

When asked what the biggest headline is from the past year in music, Clive smiled and said simply, "Taylor."

"Look, it's a phenomenon that's occurred rarely in the history of pop music. She really has had phenomenal success," Davis [*said of Swift*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/31/entertainment/taylor-swift-travis-kelce-grammys/index.html), noting her tour, movie and her personal life. "She's affecting even football," he quipped.

"The story of her romance with the Kansas City Chiefs' Travis Kelce is dominating the news, but musically, she's very talented," Davis said. "She has moved from country to pop and now every genre of music."

At 91 years of age, Davis said he is proud of launching careers with longevity - not one-hit wonders - and is touched to see his proteges still headlining around the world. The industry has changed immensely since Davis got his start, but he is hopeful for the future.

"The music industry is healthy because of the streaming revolution," he said. "I think it's a very good time."

By Elizabeth Wagmeister, CNN

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