Interviewee: Danny Everitt

Interviewer: Norie Guthrie

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Danny Everitt oral history transcript

Norie Guthrie: My name is Norie Guthrie from the Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University. I am interviewing Danny Everitt. Today is October 9th, 2017. This is part of the Houston Folk Music Archive oral history project. Can you tell me about your early life?

Danny Everitt: My early life as a child, as a child, a small child, um, I came from a very happy, um, well-grounded family life. I have two brothers; one 5 years old, one 5 years younger. Both my parents were very, uh, kind people, hard-working people. I thought everybody had that kind of life growing up, and later found out not so much. But I was raised in a small town on the coast called Victoria, Texas, and pretty much, uh, was given as much opportunity as that kind of, uh, environment would offer. Uh, new school in the first grade, new home in, in the suburbs, edge of town, was a military neighborhood, so there was a lot of different people to meet and know when I was 6 years old, and they would come and go and disappear because dad would be transferred somewhere overseas or wherever. It was an Air Force base, so it's been closed a long time ago. But I had a nice diverse, uh, uh, upbringing with children in the neighborhood, playgrounds, felt completely safe. Uh, we never locked our doors. In the 50s, it was just fairly ideal. I, I've since learned that my father had some offers for employment in Houston, but wanted to raise his children, his family in a small town being from a very small west Texas upbringing themselves, both my mother and father, uh, probably had some insight as to, um, how to best raise a family safely in a smaller town than the big city. So I sang with my mother standing next to my mother in church every Sunday morning and Sunday night, and Wednesday night. In our church there were no musical instruments around so it was all a cappella and I attribute my love of singing and my ear for harmony to singing alto with her, and I would follow in the hymnal the notes. I knew where our notes were and she was right there, and I just mimicked her and I, I can't say that I learned to sight read, certainly not technically, but I knew how that worked sort of subconsciously. And then one of the song leaders in the church, um, took me aside and tried to teach me to sing bass as a 9-year-old or whatever. So but he did teach me important voice exercise, you know, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, things like that. And I got to know kinda how it all works out on the, on the printed page, and I really enjoyed the music. Uh, that was, to me, the only thing at church that, that I looked forward to 'cause the sermons were, you know, 9 years old, 10 years old. A lot of music in our home. Father could play the harmonica. He had a friend who played guitar. His best friend would bring that guitar over and strum. I was just, felt fixated and fascinated by the guitar. So I grew up listening to Hank Williams, uh, the Everly Brothers, um, Johnny Cash, on and on, and then rock and roll. And it, I can't brag about this because there's, I did nothing to deserve it, but I was born at a period in, in time an American cultural evolution that was spot-on fun and in my way of thinking it was created just for my entertainment, you know. When I was old enough to watch and listen, Elvis burst onto the scene.
Elvis came to Victoria, and there are a couple of eating establishments, The Dairy Treat being one of them, um, that, uh, allegedly Elvis would always stop at when he came through Victoria before he was a big star. Um, rock and roll began to tug at my heart strings and having a foundation in country music it wasn't that far of a stretch. I got it. I got it. I grew up listening to, um, Marty Robins, then came Cash, Johnny Cash, and, uh, we had a little turntable, a record player and we had two radio stations, and I listened to them constantly just going back and forth. So I was really fascinated by music. I had an active learning curve from church, and I ended up being a song leader in our church on Wednesday nights. Never interested in choir at school. I was more interested in athletics and sports. There was a ukulele on every vacation. In every room in our house there was always somebody plunkin' and a singin' somethin'. My older brother could play the ukulele and he had a great voice, still does. Both of my brothers are very talented, and my mother, uh, eventually got a key, electric keyboard which turned into a Baldwin triple-decker, you know, organ, and so there was music in our home, instruments involved, but not in church, just the voice. So I think had a healthy dose of, uh, popular music of the day. Um, and eventually my pleading and with the encouragement of my father's best friend I found a guitar under the Christmas tree; turned out to be a wonderful acoustic guitar made by Gretsch. At the time, all I knew was Gibson, you know, Gibs, I wanted a Gibson Sunburst. We had a beautiful music store in Victoria. They, the son of the owner was my age. I mean, again, as we go through this, everything that, that I encounter through my life was for me. I mean, it was tailored for me. The son of the music store owner was my age, in my class at school. There were lots of elementary schools, but Bubba was in my class. So I go down to Hothschild's and say hey, Bubba, how you doin'? Uh, can I play that guitar? Sure. You know, they wouldn't necessarily let any customer do that, but I could. They would let me take a guitar home; unheard of today I should think. I don't know. I haven't tried it in years. But there were many times when I'd have, you know, a fantastic, uh, Gibson guitar in my house, and so I got the chance to s, to live with that sound and what that means. I couldn't play. So my mother found a guitar teacher in town. Lou Parsley was blind and he taught guitar and he sold and traded guitars out of his home, and I went down to have my first guitar lessons and the first thing he taught me was the names of the strings, you know. He could, he tuned up my guitar. He'd go now Danny, this is an E. This is a B. And I'm studying, and this is a G. This is a D. This is a A, and this is another E, two Es. Can you remember that? Sure. You know, all I could, all I could think of were his blue eyes, blue marble eyes, no pupil, and cigar smoke. I mean, it wasn't, I wasn't concentrating quite as much as I should have. So I wrote it down on a piece of paper so I'd have it next week, and I went home and I tried, and I'm just a kid and, so I get back to the next lesson, and he picks up the guitar. He says, "What's that string Danny?" That's a G. "What's that string Danny?" That's a A. He said now try it without the cheat notes. He was onto me and he didn't miss a thing. Lou Parsley was sharp. He played professionally. He played in dance bands there in Victoria. Anyway, I went to him, I think, you know, I've always said I only took three guitar lessons, but I, it had to be more, but I, but I'm, you know, that number sorta stuck with me. I did not learn to, I didn't walk out of there as a proficient student at all. I simply learned three chords, and I learned what a progression was. So this is basic understanding of how song structure might be, and that was about it 'cause my parents certainly were not well off and, and, uh, if, if I wasn't, you know, ex, thrilled about going to guitar practice I'd always complain about it, oh no. Then there was no reason to pay $7.00 a lesson or whatever it was. But I was never without a guitar in my hand. I learned to tune it, and I learned to strum it, but it took a long time – if you've ever tried to play guitar, when you first learn it takes a long time to get your fingers in the right position. So you
can't really sing a song. It's just, it's mechanical, and it's difficult, and it hurts. And one day, I had
gotten to the point where I could sing “Red River Valley.” That's a song that he taught me.
Actually not sing it, play it, you know. Okay. I could sing it, I mean I could play it, but I could
only play the lead and a friend the street over got a guitar that Christmas too, and we both were
playing together. And one day I'm in the backyard of my house a train with its lights off about a
mile away and then the Doppler effect will make it change, you know, but, but it was the same
note as I was playing. I had a rhythm section for just about 10 seconds. I immediately grabbed
my guitar, no case. We didn't have cases, had a string on it. Tie that string – I ran through the
field. It was a brand new neighborhood so a lot of vacant lots around there. I ran through the
houses, over to Bobby's house, in the house I go. Grab your guitar and don't talk and play this.
He goes okay. He goes wow. I said yeah. And it just, you know, the lights were coming on, so
we formed a band. We were The Cardinals. He was, he was the rhythm. I was the lead, and his
brother had a one snare drum and a cymbal that big. And they painted, his mother painted a red
cardinal on the skin of that snare. Of course, no one could see it. But we wore red satin shirts.
We played in the little elementary school talent shows, and that's how it all started. It was idyllic.

Norie Guthrie: So were you 9, 10, 11?

Danny Everitt: Yeah. Yeah. And then junior high came along, more talent shows, and by then I
was actually playing. Um, I think Bobby and Kent were military kids, so they, they vanished, but
I'd already had a dose of what it sounds and feels like to, to receive applause and I was struck by
that. And, um, I had a very normal childhood; maybe not as normal because of the music part
and actually playing music, but I played every sport. Scrawny little kid, slow, uh, but just eager
to please my dad and he was an athlete at his school growin' up, and I had great teachers. I can
remember – you know, we all hopefully have at least one or two key educators in our lives that,
that matter. One was in the fifth grade, and she was stern, and no nonsense, very proper. We all
laughed because she would eat a hamburger with a knife and fork. She was very proper. And I
couldn't wait for summer to get there 'cause I'm through with her. She moved up to the sixth
grade, and I got her again, so I had her for 2 years in a row; best thing that ever happened for me
because my mother was interested in floral design, flower arrangements, arrangements. She was in
the garden club. I'm kind of a momma's boy, and I was the right age. My little brother was too
young; my older brother was a teenager and he was out doing teenager stuff. So I was the exact,
just for me, exact age to tag along with mom who was always a hoot, great fun, fun person, to,
uh, the annual flower show. So what? I entered the flower show. There were themes that you had
do to. There were things that, something, one, I think this one had to do with song titles, you
know, “Catch a Falling Star “of something. You gotta make an arrangement that fits that, and
then the junior level that I was in I got a couple of blue ribbons and a gold ribbon. And so after
the, after the judging was all done I'm, I'm kinda walkin' around and who do I bump into but my
sixth grade teacher. She is a garden club enthusiast. Well she's thought that's great. Here's this
snooty kid from my class who's always the class clown and getting into, into trouble,
but, you know, that was a link outside the classroom, and as it turns out, toward the end of the
year as I'm gonna leave the elementary school and go cross town to the junior high, she took me
aside and she said you have something special. And I never thanked her for that. I never said
thank you for that, but she gave me opportunities to be involved with student council and carry
the, hold the flag for traffic after school, you know, little special things. I'd get to go around and
get the absentee slips, get out of the classroom. Getting special treatment I made the connection
if I behave and don't cause trouble, school's a lot more enjoyable. And, and that's how, um, I began kind of figuring out the system of how to get along, but actually getting stuff back, getting things, you know, school was no longer just a grind and I made decent grades. It was, I was no scholar, but, um, I beg, I discovered the theater eventually. I discovered student politics, was always running for something. And music was a big part of that 'cause I could play, you know, a, a campaign song, not only for myself but for somebody else. If I wasn't running, I, they would come get me to write a song for me, Danny, you know, so we can have something to sing at the rally. And fast forward into high school I think it was the future teachers I was the campaign manager for somebody running for an office and the st, at the state level. We were in Austin, Texas right on, uh, Lake Austin, which is now LB, uh, Lady Bird. It was a Hyatt. It's still there, but it's something else now. It was a Hyatt Hotel, and while all the other kids were sneaking cherry vodka and wine or whatever, I was in a room alone with two tape recorders, reel to reel, tape recorders, and this is the truth, it, no one ever told me to do this or taught me how to do this, but I got to thinking, thinking about that train providing the rhythm sound and me playin' the solo. I said I'm gonna record the rhythm, play it back, record that and play over it. I just invented overdubbing on my own. And I stayed up all night for that. I mean, it didn't seem late at all, but it was wee hours. What, what made me finally stop was the sun started coming up, and I had a whole other day of whatever I had to do. And I recorded a song, no idea what song it was, but I was back and forth losing quality every time, you know. It wasn't a true overdub, but things like that began to fascinate me, and then I eventually found myself in a, in a, I say a real recording studio. It was an actual studio, four track studio there in Victoria. I remember the walls and the ceiling were covered in apple, I mean, egg cartons –

Norie Guthrie: Hmm.

Danny Everitt:– for the acoustics, and we recorded a song, uh, a guy wrote about LBJ; The Great Society, it was a real folky thing. So I had my band. We were the back-up band for this guy, my first experience in a, a legitimate recording studio. Um, won the battles of the bands. My best friend was the bass player, still is one of my very closest friends and cousin to the woman I'm married to, so we've had a lifetime relationship, you know, from the earliest memories that I have, and I think that's one of the things my parents appreciated about living in a small town is that aspect of not permanency but just longevity in relationships which I think is very helpful and important. Um, he and I formed a band and, uh, we played through, throughout the, uh, formative years. There were other bands, so that we had a sense of competition. And the instruments got more expensive, and we actually started getting paid. I had a little problem because I wasn't supposed to play at dances. Dancing was not allowed in my family's household, so I could, we could book a, a, a, a dance as long as they didn't publicize it, so it really wasn't, it was like the Catholic Youth Organization. They'd have a Wednesday night, you know, punch and live music thing so all the little teen bands would be playin'. We'd make 100 bucks. Yeah, thank you. Um, and I finally got busted 'cause we got a prom, and it was in the local "What's Happening This Weekend" column, and my mother said is that your band? Huh, uh, oh that's another band over in Edna that uses the same name we have, mom. She said oh okay, well I want you to stay home tonight. Sure. So I get on the phone, I can't, I can't be there. They had to do it without the lead singer, so, you know, that's been a source of humor among my fellow bandmates for many decades, and, uh, when I, when I finally got out of high school, I, my dad says okay, you gotta get a job. You're not gonna lay around here and surf like you did last
summer. You're gonna actually get a job. I wondered what I'm gonna do. Um, a friend whom I had known because of my activity in school plays in high school was playing at a local restaurant not far from us, so somehow I managed – I don’t remember how – to actually have a conversation with him. He says I'm about to leave and they don't have anybody to replace me. Bring your guitar in and see what happens. I borrowed a guitar. At that point, my guitar was broken or destroyed or lost. I borrowed a guitar, went in an played and I was making in, like in 1 day I was making money. My father was just amazed, you know. Instead of being thrilled, he wanted me to be, actually what he wanted me to do was go to work, you know, in the oil field, you know, as a roughneck or some physical labor to kinda see what the world was really about. But that started a chain, a link, a chain event thing in my hometown. The manager of that place was offered a job near the coast down in Port Aransas which is where we always surfed. Would I come there and play? Yeah. Near the beach? Room and board? And I play, get paid to play music? Are you – well, let's see. So I went down there and wound up that summer and as that, as, at the end of the summer a gentleman came up with his business card and said I have a restaurant in San Antonio. Would you care to come play? We would love to have you come play. And I went to San Antonio, and that was during – you're too young to remember the HemisFair, but it was Texas version of a World's Fair, and it was developing downtown San Antonio. So I was playing on the Riverwalk at a nice restaurant during HemisFair. HemisFair was on, so there was a lot of, you know, walk-in trade, lot of vis, hu, hu, buff, uh, hustle and bustle, and it was fun, but what really made it fascinating to me was right across the river on the dow, on the other bank of the, of the Riverwalk was a jazz club and Lionel Hampton was playing in that jazz club. So I would make my way over there in the afternoons 'cause nothing to do and listen to him rehearse, and I made friends with the sax player. He was a student at UT which is where I wanted to go to school. And we began a friendship and he taught me a super valuable lesson. Again, everything just sort of falls into place. I was telling my wife that. I feel like I've been, you know, uh, just chosen. There's been so many wonderful things that have happened to me quote unquote as a coincidence, but I don't believe in coincidences. And he would come over and I would play, and he would have dinner, early dinner or something. My hours were different. That was a true nightclub. I was a restaurant, basically a happy hour lookin' thing. And on my breaks I'd sit and talk with him and I'd moan. I'd say oh man I'm so tired of playing these, these songs, you know. And he goes what? What are you doing? Are you complaining? Well. He said man, you're playing music. You're gettin' paid to play music. What are you complaining about? You know, and he really busted me, and it, it stuck. And I did thank him. You know, that was one of those moments, uh, in your development that you, you, if you're fortunate enough to have one you, you better think hard about what is being said 'cause I didn't take it, I was taking I lightly, but I, but I was a serious, um, student of, of music. I wasn't, I was writing. I certainly was writing but not much, but I was learning other people's songs, and that's how you kinda learn how, how, how the structure and how to, where, where your range may be. And I was never, I was never terribly ambitious at all, but I was doing just enough to keep it interesting for me and I had enough natural gift, natural talent that I could fa, I could fool everybody. And occasionally some, some real influence would come into my life like him, and, uh, 'cause he read. I mean, he was, he was a sight reader. I could go on and on. I'm just rambling now.

Norie Guthrie: You're doing, you're doing just fine.
Danny Everitt: Well I got to know, I gotta, believe it or not that following fall I had a scholarship, a voice scholarship. I did, like I told you I was never interested in nor was I ever in a choir, but I had been involved with, with high school plays and the drama teacher called, picked up the phone and called the junior college choir teacher and said I've got somebody who's got something. You, you wanna meet him, and his name is – so I went over and I met Ruth Williams, and sang for her. I took my guitar and sang. And she said okay. So the deal was full scholarship, but I had to be in the choir, and I had to learn to play another instrument, so I said I'll learn to play the piano, and I had to learn to read. Mm, that's work. But I, I, I managed. That was a fun experience because one, she was a world class voice, voice teacher. She was in our town because her husband was a chemistry teacher, a high school chemistry teacher. He had a job. She had a job, but she could've taught at any university. She was really well known. And I didn't appreciate it until I found out why did we have Andre Previn in Victoria from Houston? She knew André Previn. She knew Birgit Nilsson. She knew all these opera singers, and they would come to our town and give a performance. So I was studying classical music, and one semester we got everybody handed, um, Negro spirituals. Wow this will be interesting. Cool. Oh cool. And the way it worked was the college students and the high school choirs were all learning the same parts so that the writer of these original pieces would come in, have 1-day rehearsal and that weekend having been promoted through the community for ticket sales, we'd have this giant event where he would talk and tell stories and then lead or sing and we would be his back-up choir, 100 voices. He wrote the song "Amen", amen, amen. Dr. Jester Hairston and I became friends, and I eventually left junior college and remained friends with Dr. Hairston for many years 'til he passed away. When I met him, he was in his 80s. His grandmother was a slave, and he told the most chilling stories about having infants and the running away from the, the authorities and having to drown the baby to keep from giving away their position. I mean, stories like that. “Elijah Rock,” “Amen,” I mean, the, the, the, he was the best I think. He's probably the best I've no doubt about that. He was an actor. He was in movies and TV. He was on the TV series *Amen*. He had a little bit part in – wonderful man. And he'd look at me, Danny, what do you wanna do with your life? I said well I think music is – he'd say oh that's good. It's a wonderful life. Do you read? Um, not so much. He goes oh that's, that's a shame because in Hollywood where I live if you can't read an unknown piece of music like you can read a newspaper, there's five guys in the hall who can, and they will replace you that fast, so I, I advise you to learn to read. I never did. I never did. Went to contest in Denton. North Texas State was the music school, and I'm singing Puccini, you know, and the critics, the judges – there are only three judges. That's it, just you, the pianist and the judges. They write “nice instrument; needs work.” I said you know somethin' they're right. I need a job. That's what I – finally made it to University of Texas and formed a band, and within a year, year and a half we had a recording contract.

Norie Guthrie: What was the name of that band?

Danny Everitt: Dog Food.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

Danny Everitt: A whole other story. It's too long. Um, our lead guitar player was, was the focus of the band, was really an amazing musician with street cred, credentials, experience, and we
formed everything around him until one day he said aha I'm not gonna be in the band anymore. Leon Russell called me and I've gotta go, today. So we got, we found another lead guitar player, and he said I'll play in your band 'cause we played original music, but I'm never gonna be in a band called Dog Food, so we had to find a new name, so we changed the name to Austin, how original. Austin from Austin. And we had a good run until he got drafted, went to the Army. About that time I graduated college, uh, with a degree in radio, television and film. The day I graduated, the day after I graduated, literally George H.W. Bush was the commencement speaker. You see, my life just sort of things just fall into place like that, you know. Um, I didn't know I was a senior until I got the notice to go be fitted for a cap and gown 'cause I was having so much fun playin' in a rock band and makin' movies; not making, not always must makin' 'em but goin' and seein' 'em. We, we'd get first run copies of, you know, um, Clockwork Orange, uh, I can't remember. There were a number of – we got, we got to see them before they were released to the public. Of course, we had this wonderful film department. And, uh, I got a degree in radio, television, film. I had absolutely no idea – the first day I was on, in class and we were in a, I was in a room with 300 students. He said raise your hand if you're an RTF major. Everybody. He said folks, let me, let me tell you somethin'. There aren't that many jobs in the country as we speak. That class began to thin out, you know, and I finally made it to graduation and went straight to Nashville, Tennessee. Um, what was going on in Austin I was not wild about even though I like it a lot now. It was called outlaw country, and many of the guys, well the guy came up with that, you know. He's a dear, dear friend of mine now. You know, the whole cosmic cowboy thing and that involved Michael Martin Murphy and B.W. Stevenson, Bob Livingston, Jerry and Jeff Walker, Willie, Waylon, that whole thing was just exploding. Well I was in a rock band. Then you ask yourself why did you go to Nashville, Tennessee which was –

Norie Guthrie: That's what I'm wondering.

Danny Everitt: Yeah. Austin was the re, re, the rebellion towards Nashville music. It really was, and I knew that at the time, but it was either LA or Nashville. And LA intimidated me. The thought of moving out there and knowing no one, but I knew no one in Nashville either. For some reason, I don't know. I don't know why I made that decision. I don't regret it.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: Um, 'cause ultimately I did move to Los Angeles, and I never felt at home there. I liked LA. I liked the weather, and I had, you know, a good run out there, but Nashville fit me and my personality a little bit better. It's just all the activity was back in Austin, you know. And so I was fortunate, very fortunate in Nashville to find an agent right away and he immediately put me to work and I traveled, um, extensively throughout the south and the Midwest and was headed to the west coast. I got as far as Ogden, Utah, and the people that I had met and played with in Kansas City, Missouri called and said we, we're gonna form a band, but we, we've already got two guitars and voices. Would you be the third voice and play bass? We'll do a little Crosby, Stills, and Nash thing, you know. Sure. So I reversed engine and left, uh, Ogden and came back to Kansas City and formed a band called Pilgrim which was a good little band. Um, both the guys in the band were writers. Uh, fast forward 2, 3 years I'm in another band in Houston playing at Theodore's and the bass player we picked up had been in Pilgrim, and Shake had been in
Kansas City. Just prior to my moving there, he had moved down to Austin and was kind of bein' caught up in that whole scene that I had left behind. While I'm in Kansas City, everybody kept sayin' you're from Texas, where? I said Austin. They say oh you know Shake Russell? No, I never heard of him. You know John Vandiver? No, never heard of him either. You ever heard of Ewing Street Times? No, I never heard of that. Oh okay. So and I was a little late in catching up to Shake and John and everybody, but that all occurred when I went to a Willie Nelson picnic in College Station and a friend of mine who I just spoke to on the phone over, on the way here. She, she now lives in Los Angeles. Was part of a film crew, and she was filming, documenting Willie Nelson's 4th of July picnic in College Station at the World Speedway over there. She was busy, so she said we'll talk later. You know, she's down in the mosh pit in front of the stage and it's hot as blazes. I have a backstage pass, so I have showers and cold beer and air conditioned Winnebagos and stuff. She's out there in the mud and the mud and the blood and the beer. And we did talk later and she invited me to come to Houston. It was she who in, who introduced me to Theodore's.

Norie Guthrie: Now what year?


Norie Guthrie: Okay. All right.

Danny Everitt: Willie Nelson's picnic in 1976 was in College Station.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

Danny Everitt: I still have the T-shirt. And she had no spare bedroom, just a pallet on her garage apartment over in West U not far from where we are now. And I had nothing tying me down. See I was a complete free-spirited drifter. All I had to do was pick up the phone and say Fig, book me, and he would. You know, next week be in Champagne, Illinois. Okay. Had a van. I was livin' the dream. I have to tell you, I had no catastrophes other than gettin' robbed a couple times, all my stuff stolen. Um, but I had no true legitimate tragedies that were goin' on. I was free. I had money. Um, I was not committed to anyone or any place, and it was, it was exactly the way I wanted. I wanted to be a traveling musician in the mold of the characters in Gordon Lightfoot's songs or Paul Simon's songs or Springsteen was happening, was starting to happen at that time. Um, I was introduced to music of the day because people would come up with a request written on napkins and say can you play "Help Me Make It Through the Night"? I've never heard the song. Next day buy the record, learn "Help Me Make It Through the Night". So it was, it was a wonderful, you know, uh, laboratory for a young guy with, uh, big eyes and some dreams to match, you know. Uh, you know what? I've already had a recording contract. I know how that feels. So this might work out, so I moved from Nashville to Houston and began playing at Theodore's and then I, then I noticed that a number of other places for live music, um, began to spring up and if I had been given a chance to write my story I couldn't have come up with it from scratch. What I really wanted to do is what happened, and that is be not necessarily at the formative or the birth of but be involved in a scene like the one I had missed by a year or two in Kansas City that involved, um, Ewing Street Times, um, Mike Finnegan, Finnegan and Wood. Mike Finnegan is the keyboard player with Stephen Stills now and a lot of other people, world
class keyboard player. But Finnegan and Wood were hot. There was a group called Mark Almond, had nothing to do with the Allman Brothers, A-L-M-O-N-D, Mark Almond; John Mark and maybe John Allman I don't know, Brewer and Shipley, all these Kansas City acts were already signed and well known, so that wasn't a scene that embraced me nor could I, I couldn't tag along and find my way. I just, uh, it was, it was, I missed the boat, but I found one in Houston, Texas, and it was virtually ideal for a young writer because for whatever reasons the men and women who populated the song writing community in the Montrose were very generous with our, with their time, ex, exceedingly generous and kind to one another. They shared. I recall hangin' out one afternoon in Anderson Fair. In one corner was Vince Bell strummin' a song he just wrote. In another corner was John Vandiver sharing something with Shake. In another room or over by the kitchen was Bill Cade and every one of them and, and, and there were a couple of others. They escape me now who it was. But it was that kind of scene and the list just goes on and on. As a matter of fact to this day as I'm getting older and attending funerals and memorial services and tributes to people who passed someone will come up to me and say they were the drummer and oh I remember that band. Yeah, how you don', man. I never met him during the time but 'cause we were all workin', so there, it's really possible to have been in the scene with Danny Everitt and never had met him.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: And vice versa 'cause we were always playin' on – every night of the week, that calendar I brought you Corky's had live music 7 days a week 'round. Oftentimes, more often than not, two acts. Now Les Pettigrew what a guy. Made that possible. Theodore's, Corky's were in my world, my tiny little piece of the world were, was everything. The rest were satellites, you know. There was Lovejoy's. There was Houlahan's. La Bodega. Armadillo World Headquarters. The Agora Ballroom. Rockefeller's. I was the first band to play Rockefeller's, the very first band. Cody's. I was the first band to play Cody's. You know where that is up on, on Montrose and Lovett?

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

Danny Everitt: That ten-story building.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: Nightclub. It's now a jazz club.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

Danny Everitt: But at the time they did what we do. I was the last band to play Theodore's, and I have that recording. I'll give it to you.

Norie Guthrie: So can you talk a little bit about Theodore's?

Danny Everitt: I, it's on a disc, but I need a copy of it.
Norie Guthrie: That's fine.

Danny Everitt: It's not, it hasn't been, it's just continuous live cassette somebody digitized. And, uh, it's the final night at where it all began.

Norie Guthrie: 'Cause that closed around '78, '79? Yeah, '78?

Danny Everitt: '78 or '79.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: So there was about a 3-run, 3-year run for me and oft times I would play at the happy hour.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: Huge happy hour trade. A tiny place. It was an old house. The owner, Ted, Theodore, had an antique business as I understand it, and I think he owned two houses, properties, and he combined the – he kept his antique business going here and turned this Victorian mansion into a nightclub. It was two stories, two floors and an, and a, a tricked-out attic where the band could go up and chill out. So he had a bar downstairs, a bar on the – oh and then he opened a bar on the back, backyard, so there were two bars on the lower levels. I don't think there was one on the second floor. I don't remember. But I do remember him cutting, having a hole cut in the ceiling directly above the very small stage in the downstairs room, front room, and a railing and one time my brother came to Houston to hear me play, and he had 100 $1.00 bills dropping 'em, and of course we're playing and it was like whoa. The audience is grabbin' 'em and the bass player's steppin' on people's hands. And we consumed a lot of tequila in that place. Um, it was, it was riotously fun at times. Late one night after hours we're breakin' down. We're closing up. We're down to our last song, so there's a pretty good crowd. There's a ruckus by the front door which is right by the stage, and the manager is called. Kinda, you get a sense of the ebb and flow of things. Short, long story short, it's Joe Cocker and his entourage. Finished their show, and they came to Theodore's. They've heard about it. Oh well, Mr. Cocker, come on in, you know. So they stayed and hung out. We all went to breakfast together. Um, another night a note came up and said can you play anything by the Kinks. The Kinks, huh. I liked the Kinks, but wasn't wild about “Lola,” L-O-L-A, you know. So I started punkin' it, and made fun of it. [indecipherable] OK yeah. Off the stage the manager comes over and says somebody wants you, wants to meet you. It was Ray Davies. And I said oh, Mr. Davies, I – 'cause I've heard them live. I love the Kinks. But I said I am so embarrassed. I like what you did with it, you know. Like it's a new version, you know. Buy him a beer, you know. He was a real gentleman about it. Nice guy. There was, there were moments, you know, off the stage and ar, in and around Theodore's that you just kind of remember as being fun. Um, not earth shattering. But back to the, the, uh, the gentlemen, and I mean that sincerely, the gentlemen and ladies who were the songwriters, uh, always – Lynn Langham was part of that. Just saw her last weekend. She'll be here. Uh, always generous with our, with their time and their, their contacts. Didn't have any of that kind of hoarding of information, at least not to, by the people that I was attracted to. And we all encouraged and sat in with each other. I can thank Shake in large part for
that. He was the kind of guy who would come in, bring his bass. He could play, he plays left handed, but he plays a left hand, a right-handed instrument upside down. So if he didn't bring a bass and there was one on stage he could play it. Um, and Shake would come in and sit in when I'm playing solo and play with me. Or if, uh, Rick Gordon is in, on, on my wing Shake would play bass. We'd have a trio just like that. Shake would never accept money 'cause he didn't wanna be committed to tomorrow night, you know, or anything else. He could leave after that song if he wanted to, but it got to be, uh, understood that if one of us showed up at the other's gig we were welcome on stage; bring a harmonica, bring our voice, play a song. That's the generosity that I found to be extraordinary. I took it for granted because I hadn't known much of anything else. I had never been involved in the scene where I had like the seniority to climb up on stage, but it didn't really matter. There were people who would ask if, if I would let them sing a song on my break. Sure. Sure. Not so much in Hollywood. That doesn't happen. I never found that to be – we asked many times. Our whole band was out there. They would, no one woulda share, let us share their instruments or the amps, nuh uh, no. But, um, the Houston folk scene, uh, was one of undeniable generosity in, as far as I am concerned.

Norie Guthrie: Do you think that's what made it a scene?

Danny Everitt: Made it, made it what?

Norie Guthrie: Do you think that's what made it a scene like why –

Danny Everitt: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: – it was so –

Danny Everitt: I do. I do. Uh, if everybody was hoarding their contacts or their agents or, um, their gigs, uh, it woulda been different, and the fact that there was so much give involved, uh, we all gave to one another that way. If one of us was sick, you know, chicken noodle soup was brought to his home. Um, it was just a kind and enthusiastic place to be, and I wish it for anyone who wants to be in music, and again since I've only been in this, really this one here – I was in the Austin scene for a while, and I didn't have any objections. There's nothing I can object to that I saw, but it wasn't like this. Had I went, you know, 4 years, 5 years later after college. Uh, again, I was just at the right age. In college I was a bit green and intimidated by everything, you know. I'd go down, frequently go down and here Stevie Ray Vaughn playin' for, for 12 people in a place. Got to meet him, hang with him and Jimmie, but I never felt anywhere on the same footing with those folks. It wasn't because of anything did, they did or didn't do. It's just I was scared, not bold about it at all, and I didn't walk into the Houston scene as a big, bold person at all, but it sort of formed as I was arriving, and, uh, I felt, I feel tremendously fortunate having been there during that time. I started the song here at her apartment. Went back to Nashville, gathered my things.

[Plays “Blue Texas Morning”]
It was raining in Nashville Memphis is cold / The winter got Jackson, Mississippi, ol’ New Orleans just got old / So I stopped at a phone booth once I crossed the state line / My sweet home in Texas—It’s been a long, long time

I know an angel in Houston our friendship is whole / Her eyes are the ocean her heart is pure gold / She’ll feed me if I’m hungry I know she cares / She treats me like kinfolk whenever I’m there

Easin’ back to you again / It’s a blue Texas morning and I need a friend / Like a stray dog in the shadows, just hangin’ around / Blue Texas morning don’t let me down

I say blue Texas morning / I know you won’t let me down

Norie Guthrie: Thank you. Would you like to talk a little bit about Corky's?

Danny Everitt: Corky's. You know, what can I say? Um, Corky's opened probably a year after I discovered Theodore's which had al, had been opened for a number of years I understand. But there was plenty of room for growth in the area in the Montrose, and Corky Fields seized upon it, and he had a partner or two. He eventually sold his interest. Ownership changed. Uh, the man who picked up the mantel and continued and really made it happen, uh, in its full, you know, full bloom was Les Pettigrew and his wife Eileen. Two absolutely wonderful people. Things change. My situation had changed. I had, I had gotten married. My wedding reception after the wedding was at Corky's. Um, eventually that, that marriage went south, and I moved to Austin after spending some time in California I believe. I don't remember now. But Les would let me stay, Les and Eileen would let me stay, uh, with them. I'd take the bus. He'd pick me up. He would literally pick me up at the their, bus terminal, take me to his home, let me sleep in his home, play in his club, pay me for the privilege, feed me, take me back to the bus station. I mean, who does that? He was just that kind of a person. They, they were the, that type of people. And so I played Corky's, um, nonstop for years, 2 or 3 years. When I say nonstop I mean I still have, occasionally I'll run across a calendar they would put these little cards out on everybody's table to show you what's comin' up in the month. You know, I count 11 dates out of, 'cause it was 7 out of 30. I was gettin' a third of Corky's, but it was not always a full band appearance or a headliner if you will. He, he was pretty good about spreading the wealth, so I would get like an opening act. That's 50 bucks, I think. Or a happy hour would be basically tips, so my name would appear that many times, but that wasn't full headline deal, and truly, um, it was the weekends that really were the busiest. Uh, he didn't have the walk-in downtown business trade that, that Theodore's had, um, cultivated. They really had a lot of, you know, lawyers who would come down. They had a big round table with, you know, engraved plaques with guy's names on it, you know. That's long-term business and customer relations. But they, they came on the scene, Corky's came on the scene and, and really made an impact and made a lot of musicians very, very happy. Um, it was, it was good. It was a good thing to see something catch on and, and thrive, and Corky's was a major part of that. You can't talk about that scene without talkin' about Corky's and Theodore's.

Norie Guthrie: Um, so in the 70s you also, um, were the New Folk Winner at Kerrville.

Danny Everitt: Right.
Norie Guthrie: How did that come about?

Danny Everitt: That came about by way of Nashville. Even though I resided in Nashville, I was not there very much. I was on the road constantly. When I would come home to Nashville, I had a hangout. It was the place to be at the time called the Exit / In. The bartender at the Exit / In and I became fast friends; songwriter. Um, I gave you a photograph today and there were two guys, me, I was one of 'em, and another guy, that's the other guy. It was Mark McKinnon. And Mark wonderful songwriter, protégé, the reason he was in Nashville, he was a protégé of Kris Kristofferson who had discovered him in Denver where Mark is from. Said look you can stay in my apartment. You have access to my publishing and I have a studio in the basement. That's, other than that you're on your own. If your mother will let you come. He was very young. He was 17, I don't know. So all goes well, and he got a job tending bar at the Exit / In and we became friends, and I don't recall precisely when he said this, but obviously right after it happened. He had entered the contest. It's a competition and won. He was a New Folk Winner at the Kerrville Folk Festival which I had never heard of. I maybe had, but didn't think about it. He said man, it was fun and it's in Texas. You should go next year. So I did. I made it a point, and low and behold I was one of the finalists and I actually won. I think there are three winners. I'm, I don't know. I think it's a larger number now.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: But at that time, the judge, one of the judges was Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary fame; Charles John Quarto, great songwriter; and Allen Damron. To this day, they're pretty heavyweight folks. In the folk industry. And, uh, I was honored to, to put it mildly. I was flabbergasted that I won. Wasn't a large monetary prize, but you got to be, you got to play that night. And then you were a headliner next year. Wow. So yeah, it's always been on my resume.

Norie Guthrie: What year was that?

Danny Everitt: That, I think that was 1978.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

Danny Everitt: '77 or '78, I can't remember. I've never looked it up.

Norie Guthrie: 'Cause around '77 is when you moved back to Houston.

Danny Everitt: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

Danny Everitt: Right. So, that's right. And in truth, the, the junkets are a little hazy because you can't just live off of one nightclub for work, so I think I was probably calling my agent and sayin' book me, and so I would leave Houston and stay out on the road for weeks at a time playing in various places and then come back to Houston, and I can't even remember the first place I lived. I
was basically bunkin' on people's sofas and sleepin' in my van. Uh, then of course I met a beautiful woman and, and we married and we, that was probably my first homestead if you would, my first roots, place to sit. I know she had a dog named Dylan, loved the dog more than she loved me, but I don't blame her. He was lovable, more lovable. And she, uh, she was just a wonderful girl, and she helped me kinda settle down, and, um, take my songwriting more seriously. She's a devote, devoted lover of music, and, you know, that was one of the things that, uh, we had in common.

Norie Guthrie: So by, around 1981, um, you started to work on *Fire Down Inside*.

Danny Everitt: Right.

Norie Guthrie: Um, can you talk about that recording process?

Danny Everitt: Yeah, sure. *Fire Down Inside*, throughout the whole, um, uh, ride, the long strange trip, occasionally I would be in a recording studio having written a new song or several new songs, uh, that were, there was always some way a, it probably involved patrons, uh, recording, and I was always, uh, fortunate, gifted, blessed with great musicians in my bands. So we'd take a band into the studio, record all night, and come out with a couple of good recordings, good quality recordings, and over the years, I mean, I would own the masters. In those days the masters were 2-inch thick reels. And at some point I had so many songs, and I'll tell you who inspired me, and I've had the chance to thank him for this, is Don Sanders. He put out his own record. Really? You can do that? And I thought well if Don Sanders can do it, I can do it. And I was talkin' it over with Shake and they did it. Shake Russell, Jimmy Don Smith, his drummer, Tommie Lee Bradley, Jimmy Don Smith, Tony Braunagel, Terry Wilson, Cassandra Clark, Steve Beasley, Billy Block and Gurf Morlix. I think that's everybody. I hope I didn't leave somebody off, but those were the participants on the various demos that made up that album, and then David Keeley mixed it, uh, 'cause I had the, I had the masters, so we went out to his studio or a studio, and he mixed everything to make it even, and it became a record.

Norie Guthrie: Um, so in that time of – oh well, actually, um, some of the clubs started to close around the early to mid-80s.

Danny Everitt: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: And so what was kind of happening in the scene at that time?

Danny Everitt: I don't know. What was happening where?

Norie Guthrie: What was happening in the scene at that time?

Danny Everitt: In the scene.
Norie Guthrie: Yeah.

Danny Everitt: As I had taken my band, or, uh, my band all went to Los Angeles, and some of us stayed out there and some of us came back. Jimmy Don, our lead guitar player, came back, and immediately formed The Cold Cuts and immediately filled the vacuum that The Rhythm Tramps had left behind took out to LA. And as that, as things started changing as far as, 'cause I wasn't really here.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: But as I understand it, when I arrived there were a lot of solo artists. By the time I came back from Los Angeles, everything was a band or anything. It's hard enough to pay a band; sure hard for Les and Eileen to cover the expense of a band when they were used to gettin' by on payin' like one or two guys.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

Danny Everitt: That meant cover charge. Cover charge changes a lot of things, you know. Before it was just a fun place to wander into, sit down and spend all your money. Now you gotta spend some money just to get in, and it changes things. And that may have been part of it. I don't know. Um, there was always a cover charge at the Texas Opry House, but those were national and regional acts. We were a local scene here. And so when you're talkin' about a band, it's a new paradigm, so apart from business decisions that were made I ca, I don't really know why 'cause I, I came back and formed one more band, took one more stab at it with the wonderful guitar player, Scott McGill, and the wonderful bass player, Jack Saunders, and a wonderful drummer, Jerry Chambers. We formed a four-piece, basically a R&B band, maybe call it that, and it just never, it wasn't the same scene. It was a real folk scene when we were here, when I was here, uh, playin' my, this very guitar, um, and everybody else was too. It was a real easygoing, laid back, um, music scene, not terribly complicated, not terribly sophisticated, and then as things will tend to be they grew. I mean we outgrew ourselves. I don't know.

Norie Guthrie: Um, so then what did you do after that?

Danny Everitt: Moved to Austin. Um, tried to make a go of it in Austin. Got a really good job playin' out in Lakeway, was makin' unbelievable money, and getting more and more, uh, separated from why music, what, what music meant to me in the first place. I was basically drinkin' too much and makin' a lot of money. And my relationship fell apart. And I had told myself if I don't make it by age 30, you know, I'm done. And I was having the final conversation with my wife returning some of her property in a restaurant the night that John Lennon was assassinated. I was 30; he was 40. And something sort of shifted for me then. I just got in the car and drove all night long listening to the radio. All they played was Beatles music all night long, just sort of thinkin' what have I done? What have I done with my life? It's a real, it was a real tough time. First time that it ever had become so difficult that I didn't see a way of gettin' out and doin' anything, si-, you know, um, significant or meaningful. I hadn't been writing much at all. And my older brother offered me a job workin' with him where I had to wear a tie, and I took a
Everitt

sh-, took a shot at that; didn't last very long. I got fired. My brother had to fire me. That's a whole other story. I was in the right, but when you're answering to other people who are powerful sometimes things change your, your trajectory. And I met and married another woman and adopted a son, and that changed everything. Um, and we became a family, and I had a job, and she had a job, and we, we were livin' the dream. It was just a different dream. And, uh, my son is just about the coolest guy I know. He can outplay me, and out sing me. Uh, he's just one of those guys it couldn't have gone either way, either way. I mean, it just so happens that he's musically inclined and he's left handed, so I can't really leave him my guitar, but I tried to teach him to play right handed, and it didn't take. He just didn't – oh I guess he's not musical. Then one day I'm playin'. I never stopped playing throughout all of my life. I've never stopped playing. I just stopped giggin'. I kept recording. Well I was sitting around playing, and I was using my harmonica, and I was playin' somethin'. He goes that's a D. I said yeah. Play another one. I said what's this one? That's a G. I will give you, I said are you certain? Tell me this one. That's a C. I said I will give you $50.00 if you can get all of these right. I'll give you $50.00 cash. He goes okay. Without even so much as a stammer he got every single one of 'em right, 50 bucks later. The guy's got relative pitch. I said hey, how would you like to learn to play guitar? So I tried to teach him right handed. He didn't take to it, and I went to, uh, came to Texas. We were livin' in Nashville at the time I think. Came to Texas for somethin', you know, visits, home visits. All my family's here, and, uh, whatever his name is; I can't think of it now, Ray, uh, music store in, in Austin where I used to trade, Ray Hinton, Hinton. I said I've got this son, 12 years old, who, you know, he's really got an ear for music, but he just can't seem to, he's not interested in a guitar and did I mention he's left handed. He said so are you playin', he said did you give him, get a lefty guitar? I said no. What does he know? He said okay – Ray Hennig, that's his name – Ray said tell you what, I'll make you a deal. Reached over and got like a, you know, a Squire, a Fender Stratocaster, Squire. He said what, what, what's his favorite color? I said oh he would love a black one, and I'm gettin' out my checkbook, and he said oh yeah, I wanna – this one, here take this guitar and get this amp. I said it's gotta have a headphone jack. He said it's got a headphone jack. And, and he grabbed a, a, like a distortion box or somethin'. He said this is the key. He said put this, put all this together and if he doesn't like it, bring it back. I'll give you 100 percent of your money back. I said you just made a deal. So I took him his left-handed Stratocaster, nice little amp and the fuzz tone. He was into Nirvana, and it made all the difference in the world, and to this day he's brilliant. Um, well now that's a bunny trail. I don't know how we got off on that. Oh yeah, just getting out of the scene, yeah, leaving, leaving the life pretty much if you will of traveling and playing. Um, but, you know, eventually he grew up, left home, um, and I came back to Texas by myself and started playin' again. Here I am. That's been a lotta years. I guess I returned in '98.

Norie Guthrie: Okay. When did you start –

Danny Everitt: It's been 20 years. Huh?

Norie Guthrie: When did you start playing gigs again?

Danny Everitt: In '98.

Norie Guthrie: In '98?
Danny Everitt: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

Danny Everitt: Yeah, I came back and, and, uh, well I formed a production company in Nashville, and I was representing three songwriters and trying to make end roads into the business of, of music then, uh, a lot of other things happened. He, Chris moved away. Um, that was pretty much my reason, purpose for staying there, and all my family's back here, all my friends are back here, so I moved back to Texas and, and took it up again and met a, a wonderful folk scene right here, as friendly and giving as anything that I could imagine. Ken Gaines, god bless him, he gave me his whole, uh, gig list. I mean all the venues that, that he had in his Rolodex. He just handed them over to me, you know. Knock yourself out, go for it. So people like Ken, Wayne Wilkerson who I knew before back in the old days. Wayne traveled with me back in the Theodore's days, um, and that, that's a whole other story, a whole other extensive list of, of kind, generous musicians and songwriters that, uh, make up the world I live in as a wonderful place. I just returned last week, I think I told you, from the, one of the folk alliances sponsored by the Kerrville Folk Festival people. Everybody there, 100 percent, there's no exceptions, felt like family. It really does. I know it's very corny and clichéd, but it really and truly felt like a family atmosphere among those songwriters.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: I'm not gonna be on the phone with them every day talking about their grandchildren or anything, but while you're in, 3 days in close quarters with these people, um, the civility and the kindness showed and the support 'cause it's, it's a song fest.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

Danny Everitt: It's constant singing and playing, and it's organized. So there's, you have three songs and now out of the room. Somebody else sits down. You got three songs. Next outta the room, three, it's that bam, bam, bam, and it's mmkay staying on time is the key to keeping it from getting it to be out of control. So I love this community. I've been very fortunate to have role models, you know. Um, I don't know how it is, you know, uh, New York City, the Village. I don't really, I kinda know how it is in LA and, and I never felt at home there. Uh, Kansas City was, as I told you, another scene that I, I was in the remnants of one, and so this has really been my home as far as the musical community is concerned. Now I'm really grateful to you and your people for documenting and archiving it. It's, it's, it's really pretty amazing that you're doing this.

Norie Guthrie: Something really special happened to Houston –

Danny Everitt: It did.

Norie Guthrie: – and if it doesn't get documented, then people start to pass away, and things get thrown away –
Danny Everitt: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: – and it's, it gets lost.

Danny Everitt: Yeah, yeah.

Norie Guthrie: And so.

Danny Everitt: Like I said, it's, it's getting, it's getting to be not routine, but frequent. I'm gonna be doing a, a tribute to Joe Romano here in a couple of weeks. Uh, we, uh, laid Les Pettigrew to rest, Billy Block, Mark Beets, uh, Tommy Dardar just recently passed. Uh, there are a number of other men and women who, uh, I have, with whom I've crossed paths that are no longer with us. It's like wow, really, wow, oh, 'cause you lose touch. There's a, a number of people involved in this scene who haven't played music in a while and if you're not in the, in the music scene so much, you lose touch with where people live, what they're doing with their lives. A lot of us have grandchildren. That's, that's the best. Um, so, uh, can I play you a song?

Norie Guthrie: Yeah. You wanna play something that's more recent?

Danny Everitt: Yeah.

[Plays “My Son”]

In my favorite bar to hear my eulogy / Up on the stage but no one could see me / There was sweet Melissa she comes in everyday / Mona sang funny how time slips away

Upstairs to escape a lifetime of mistakes / Downstairs people were crashing my wake / Two strangers called me brother one had two tongues / One man held my woman another woman held my son

Oh my son I know you must roam / Go where you will but always come home / My son my work here is done / Now love must carry on

I know them all but nothing I had said / Made any difference in the lives they led / We all want absolution while worshiping fame / Hoping the solution is someone to blame

Upstairs to escape a lifetime of mistakes / Downstairs people were crashing my wake / One man officially kept calling out my name / And the language that he used had dead perfect aim

Oh my son I know you must roam / Go where you will but always come home / My son my my work is done / Now love must carry on

When it’s dark enough to see there’s nothing left to chance / Through the smoke and the noise come’s a deafening glance / Someday you’ll have a son and someday he might ask / Tell him never give up and remember the past
Oh my son I know you must roam / Go where you will but always come home / My son my work here is done / Now love must carry on / My love must carry on / My son

Norie Guthrie: Okay. Guess I'll ask, um, one final question.

Danny Everitt: Okay.

Norie Guthrie: Um, how has your writing and playing changed over time?

Danny Everitt: Hmm. I don't know. Um, it's a mistake to write for something or it, for me anyway. I can only speak about that from my own experience and I, maybe I've, I've attempted, so I speak from experience that I have actually attempted to write something for something. Yeah. By the time you hear it, it's already gone as far as creating is concerned. You know, I was tryin' to write a song for a movie one time in the 80s when things were just crazy. It was one of these low-budget movies and everything, oh, I thought I had the Razor's Edge, you know, some, and I used a lot of, you know, disingenuous thought processes, you know, to try and do something, jumping on some kind of a bandwagon or a concept that was already created, and it was a disaster. So never abandon what truth you have, um, to me is the best advice, and if something good happens with a song that involves finances, great, or, you know, good critics' criticism, that's great. Um, so to say it wa, how, to describe how has mine changed, I would hope that it's gotten better, but I'm not really that great of a guitar player or singer or writer, so it's, I just, I do what I do and hope for the best, you know. Uh, like I said before, I'm not terribly ambitious. Um, I know people who are wildly successful and they know what they're doing and I admire them for it. They're just, wow, so good, and I think how did they, how, how'd they do that? I wish I could have said that, and that's the kinda thing, what, what artists have always meant to me are the people who say things I wish I'd said. And that's what makes it so much, uh, more interesting, uh, place to live than what a place with no art, you know, because there are people who think the way we all think, but say it and to be anywhere near that I've just been blessed beyond my wildest dreams, you know, um, and, and I, I'm sure my writing has changed, but it would, it would take somebody who's objective to make that, to answer that question. I don't know how it's changed, 'cause I haven't, again, I haven't learned a lot of new chords, you know, and gotten really good on and playin' the guitar or piano, um, but I don't think that's what you're asking. It's just has your writing has changed. Um, I still write about love, even young love, you know. Who wants to hear that from an old guy, but I still feel that way about people I love. I still feel that kind of interaction with folks, and now, or I've, actually I've always continued to bring nature into the lyric, um, things that matter or as Rodney Crowell would say, things that work, things that hold up. You know, I would like for my songs to hold up, um, long after I, I'm gone would be, uh, a, a, you know, a dying wish, you know, uhh. But, uh, I'm not goin' anywhere anytime soon and I do have a number of new songs in the hopper.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: That particular song occurred to me, uh, literally back in the days that are being archived, but I only recorded this past year. Um, I drug it around and it's kinda dark. For people, I, I play it for people and they go ooh, what are you doin', that guy's dead. Well, but, it's gonna happen to us all, and wouldn't it be nice to leave something behind, you know, so, uh, like a child
who's been raised right, who gets it. My son, my son really likes this song, even though it was written long before he was born. Anyway, that's, that's the way I can answer that question.

Norie Guthrie: Was there anything else that you would like to talk about?

Danny Everitt: I think I've covered, I, I, I didn't think, I didn't plan to say a lot of things, but what, who, I'm glad we got around to, uh, expressing the, uh, uh, profound generosity of the music scene and that includes the, the people, obviously has to include the people who supported us. I mean, it was a, a wonderful time. Uh, if you come across someone who says, "Man, I hated, you know, four or five of those guys, 'cause they were always so jealous or they were all so, you know, stingy," I'd say, yeah, I don't remember anything like that. I really, no idea. Uh, did we all get along? Pretty well, pretty well, you know. Maybe I, maybe I just block it out if there was somebody that came and went.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: Um, but the people supported us, the population, the community supported us to a way, to a degree that you couldn't, you couldn't write this kind of story. It, it was, it was just night after night after night after night they would come out, plunk down their money and listen, and if you put out a record they would buy it, and we had a radio station where I'm headed tonight to go talk and play that played our music live and still does, and we had another one, a commercial radio sta, FM station, KLOL used to play our records. We could literally walk in after a gig with our new record, they would say sit down, put on the cans, let's talk, and spin that record, and there were some DJs over there that's just, um, totally wonderful and professional about supporting the local community.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

Danny Everitt: And I believe that's what it's, why it's important to do what you're doing, as to explain it did work and it can work many, many times anywhere else as long as your heart is open to it. Um, you know, share the wealth.

Norie Guthrie: Thank you so much for coming in today.

Danny Everitt: My pleasure.

Norie Guthrie: It's been really great. Thanks.

Danny Everitt: I'm glad you came along.