Interviewer: Norie Guthrie

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Interview Transcript

Norie Guthrie: My name is Norie Guthrie from the Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University. I am interviewing David John Scribner. Today is May 19, 2017. This is part of the Houston Folk Music Archive Oral History Project. Can you tell me about your early life?

David John Scribner: Well, grew up in Northern Minnesota and, uh, small town, 10,000 people, Bemidji, and, uh, college town so there's a lot of good music around, I mean, as far as people like my parents would think, uh, there's a lot of classical stuff and, uh, and there's theatre and college theatre, not, uh, there's two movie theatres in town and, uh, that's about it, you know.

Norie Guthrie: So what first drew you to music?

David John Scribner: Well, my parents I guess because my parents, my, my mom was more, but along the classical lines, and, uh, my dad was classical and, like me, sort of everything. You know, we had the opera on records. We had polka on records. We had, you know, big band stuff on records, you know. Don't think we got the stereo until around 1960 or something. It was mainly a little RCA turntable thing that you could put together yourself and a speaker that was off to the side and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and an amp of some sort, mm, might've even been from the school, I don't know, and my dad was a teacher, and, uh, we played 45s on it or whatever. I used to play radio with it when my, uh, they let me do that and get out my Petrushka recording and play that and things like that.

Norie Guthrie: So, um, did you ever play an instrument or?

David John Scribner: Yeah, I, they gave me a test because there were people who played music in my mother's side of the family that I knew about, but I didn't know of anything on my dad's side of the family until later, but they tested me and they figured I should be playing violin. So I took 3 years of the violin and partway through I wanted to play clarinet, so I started playing clarinet too and neither of them really stuck with me. I'm partially tone deaf which doesn't help much if you're playing violin. I can read music, but I can't, uh, really play and, uh, mainly I just listen to it.
Norie Guthrie: Okay, so when, the kind of, that passion kinda started with your parents and then –

David John Scribner: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: – when did you kinda start to develop your own sense of –

David John Scribner: Yeah, and, and the first really, I guess, folk album that my, uh, parents got was, I think, was second Joan Baez album. My dad came home with it one day and that was, that sort of impressed me. And, I had Peter, Paul and Mary and some Jimmie Rodgers, not The, uh, Singing Brakeman, but the other Jimmie Rodgers album and, uh, I don't know if we had any Burl Ives or not, might've had somethin' by Burl Ives.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: The, uh, the other stuff I got, more or less, from the radio it night, so once I got old enough to have my own radio.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. So –

David John Scribner: And, uh –

Norie Guthrie: When did you end up leaving home?

David John Scribner: Well, I left home, uh, after I, after college, I mean, after high school, uh, I went away, I met, I spent that summer at home. Then I went away for one semester of college. Part way through the second semester of college, I was gone.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: I was, uh, down in Arizona for a while, then I was on my way back to college and, uh, ended up in Houston and been here ever since.

Norie Guthrie: So why did you decide to stay here? Like, or why, well, why did you end up in Houston? Like what, like –

David John Scribner: Well, I had been living in the desert in Arizona outside Tucson and also up on Mount Lemmon for about like 6 weeks or somethin', not a long time, but 6 weeks.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And I decided to go back to school and I was hitchhiking back, a guy picked me up, said he was going to Houston if I wanted to go that far, instead of cutting north at Las Cruces, said his parents were out of town and, uh, they had a swimming pool and we could hang around. I said, "Well, it sounds good to me." And, uh, when he's talking, he found out I been in Boulder the winter before and, uh, he thought I might have some mutual friends with his
old girlfriend, so he, uh, set us up sort of on a blind date. Turned out we did have mutual friends, but we got married 24 days later, and divorced 7 years later, and we didn't kill each other so pretty good, I mean, from that aspect it wasn't.

Norie Guthrie: So that's, so that's why you, you ended up falling in love and so you stayed here –

David John Scribner: Yeah, stayed here.

Norie Guthrie: – for a while.

David John Scribner: Yeah, and I should say, I guess we should go back to Minnesota little bit.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: We, originally I lived in Bemidji and then my, I guess between my junior, my sophomore and junior year, my, uh, dad got a job teaching in the Elk River School District. He had been one of the main negotiators with the high school and the, for the school teachers in their –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – negotiations for a new contract, which was sort of a new thing at that time, and he was, uh, not overly happy with the school board and they probably weren't overly happy with, with him because of the negotiating, negotiations, uh, and they, he made sure the teachers got a good deal, and, um, so he had a job offer. One of his friends from college called him up and said we're starting this new thing down here, we've got a grant from the Central Minnesota Educational Research and Development Council, do you want to come down here and work on this. And he checked with the school and they gave him a 3-year leave of absence and the idea was that if, if it stuck on, he'd stay in Elk River, you know, he wanted to st, stay down there anyway. So, um, my dad and I moved at the beginning of the school year because I ran track and cross-country and couldn't switch schools in the middle of the year and still be eligible.

Norie Guthrie: Mm.

David John Scribner: And my mom and brother stayed up there and every weekend we'd drive back and forth, 200 miles each way, and, but it was in Minneapolis that I started picking up a lot of the, of the other stuff.

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: And, in Bemidji, I'd go to the college and I'd, they, they always had the, the bookstore always had records out for sale like from the Legacy Recording type things and, uh, Archives of Folk Music, stuff like this, these little $1.99 records.

Norie Guthrie: Mm.
David John Scribner: And I picked up like Lightnin' Hopkins, and Lead Belly, and some Clancy Brothers, and Memphis Slim, and some stuff like this, and that's how I started getting' sort of interested in that. Then when I got down to Minneapolis, I found out about Koerner, Ray & Glover, so I, ss, one of my friends had one of their albums, so I went down to the store called the Electric Fetus, which is still there, it's moved about three times, but, uh, and they had, they had everythin' and I started buyin' stuff down there and also checking 'em out at the library.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Anoka County Library had a real good record collection, so I could get stuff like that out if they are and that's when I really started goin' off on that.

Norie Guthrie: Mm, okay, did –

David John Scribner: And my track coach's roommate in college had been this guy named Leo Kottke.

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: So he had a party one time, after I got out of high school, and I went over there and we got to see him and that really impressed me.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: So I just, but, you know, it's sorta grew from there. And then Tony Glover had a radio show in Minneapolis, too, and he played everything.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And I didn't realize until a few years ago, but that might be part of the idea of a way, my Chicken Skin Music came about in a sense, uh, although I played classical and jazz in the beginning, when I first started doing this show, in addition to the folk stuff.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And the, you know, blues and stuff like that, but it was, you know, everything can fit together, you just have to figure out how to put it together.

Norie Guthrie: Right. Yeah, makes sense. Um, so you kinda, did you kinda develop a little bit of like a record buying habit? Did you have to get like a job to help?

David John Scribner: Probably not until I got down here and, actually, probably not until I started doing the radio show that it got to be really bad.

Norie Guthrie: Okay. All right.
David John Scribner: Yeah, it's just, uh, yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Um, so if we move, um, unless there's more that you want to say about Minneapolis and that kind of formation and –

David John Scribner: No, I think that's, there's just a lot of good music out in Minneapolis and you, you'd hear that and besides, I guess, that was KD, I think it was probably KDWB, but Tony Glover had the show on that was on like 12, or 10 to 1, or somethin' like that. And then you'd switch over to KAY Little Rock and Clyde Clifford with Beaker Street and it was, he, he had all sorts of stuff and he, he was real good.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: That was, you know, a clear channel out of Little Rock and it was –

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: – all up and down the Mississippi Valley, and ads for record stores in New Orleans, you know, which –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – I never had the money to order anything from them.

Norie Guthrie: Um, if we move forward in time, back to Houston a little bit, when you decided to stay here, did you start to interact with the music scene that was already here?

David John Scribner: Not, not really, no. When I moved here, down, when I moved here, it, the first local musician I met was actually not as a musician, but as the director of my wife in the one-act play at University of St. Thomas, which was where she was going, and that was Joe Romano.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: And, and, as, you know, I knew he was a musician, but, I mean, I, I just met him and, you know, I talked to him a little bit, but I never did anything as far as music goes with him. I just, you know, it was just during the play and that was only for a couple days and that was it.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But, uh, no, I, I've mainly, I guess, uh, my reactions with musicians would probably come more from when I was workin' at a restaurant and like Sean Walters would come in all the time.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: And, and, you know, I talked to him and stuff like that and we'd have posters up for that stuff and, um, listen to KTRU and I picked up a lot of stuff through KTRU back then –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.


Norie Guthrie: That, that restaurant was at a place where people would play?

David John Scribner: No, no.

Norie Guthrie: Oh.

David John Scribner: It was just, it was Orlando's Burger Factory and it was like at the corner of Montrose and Alabama by University of St. Thomas, so it was sort of in the heart of, you know, Montrose –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and uh.

Norie Guthrie: Okay, um, so then did you, you didn't really, you weren't really going to any clubs at the time –

David John Scribner: N, n –

Norie Guthrie: – or were you kinds, not really?

David John Scribner: I'd, I'd go to Liberty Hall a lot –

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – simply because the guy who owned the restaurant –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – was from Argentina, as was Roberto who was one of the main people at Liberty Hall.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: So Roberto would always drop off tickets for Liberty Hall and I would usually end up with ‘em, you know, so I could, I could go there a lot, but –
Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – yeah, and, uh, and especially, I mean, I'm, you know, I'm makin' next to nothin'. I'm not, my wife's makin' next to nothing.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: If she was working, half the time she wasn't, so, I mean, we didn't have money to go out, you know, so.

Norie Guthrie: Right. What were some of the shows that you saw at Liberty Hall?

David John Scribner: Uh, I think the first one I saw was Asleep at the Wheel.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Rory Gallagher, uh, Graham Parsons, uh, Dusty Drapes and The Dusters, uh, Loudon Wainwright, uh, I'm trying to think of who else, oh let's see, it's almost, Rory Gallagher there a lot, I think I saw him there twice, Springsteen, –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – um –

Norie Guthrie: Ah, you were, you were at the –


Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, Willis Alan Ramsey, Jerry, I think Jerry Jeff, or, no that was in Liberty Hall, I don't know if I saw him at Liberty Hall, Velvet Underground, you know, we're talkin' 40 years ago.

Norie Guthrie: But you still got to see a really great line up of...

David John Scribner: Oh, yeah, I –

Norie Guthrie: Yeah.

David John Scribner: I'd get to see live and that was a great place to, to see music.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, from what I understand, my brother-in-law used to work there too for a little bit, but.
Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: And I never did ask him much about that and he just passed, so.

Norie Guthrie: So you had, um, –

David John Scribner: Sand Mountain, not the original, but the second Sand Mountain –

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: – which was over on Richmond.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I think it lasted about 3 or 4 months.

Norie Guthrie: Okay, when was that one opened?

David John Scribner: Uh, probably around 73 or somethin' like that.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: 73, 74, Greezy Wheels –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – was there. By that time, the country stuff had started to really, you know, the progressive country –

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: – and started to really come in.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: Dr. John at Liberty Hall.

Norie Guthrie: So I was tryin' to kind of, I was kind of expecting that you might've gone to show, you went to Liberty Hall shows, but you might have been going to some of the other clubs, but that probably happened to bit later, I guess.

David John Scribner: Yeah, I, when I was, the one time I went to, the first time I went to Anderson Fair it was just for lunch and I don't think anybody was playing.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.
David John Scribner: Um, like I say, I didn't have, didn't have money to be goin' out and that made a lot of difference and things.

Norie Guthrie: Right. That makes sense. So then when did you –

David John Scribner: Townes Van Zandt at Liberty Hall.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Guy Clark at the Liberty Hall, uh, not Liberty Hall, I'm sorry, Anderson Fair I'm thinkin' so, I'm getting my places mixed up.

Norie Guthrie: That's okay. So then when did you start DJ'ing?

David John Scribner: 76.

Norie Guthrie: Okay. Was that just at KTRU or also –

David John Scribner: No, that was at KUHF originally and then the flood happened and, back to the restaurant, Eric Sisson and Bob Mosley or Moe, Moe Mosley –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – used to come in and distribute the flyers to, to the various places.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Our little promo flyers and, uh, I stopped, they found out I was doing radio over at KUHF and asked if I'd like to do some at KTRU and I said yes. So they were just starting, they had just gotten, we had just gotten back up on, on the air after the flood –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and, uh, so it was like they wanted me on from 1 to 4 in the morning, so I would do two 1 to 4 in the mornings one week, and three the next, and the guy named Mike Parmett would do three one week into the next. So one week I'd do Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The next week I'd do Monday and Friday.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, and I was also doin' probably two or three nights at KUHF at that time with jazz stuff.

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.
David John Scribner: But the first stuff at KUHF was like top 40, you know, middle of the road type stuff off of 45s with –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – having a back time up with the clock and everything for news and everything else and it was, it was a workout.

Norie Guthrie: And then when you got to KTRU, what kind of program or **** –

David John Scribner: I just did regular, regular rock stuff –

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – whatever and we were real, we'd played everything and that, that was the point back then, they, they played everything.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And then, at some point, we got a new music director and he had a tendency to go, the bluegrass stuff dropped off the play list –

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – and I thought, you know, like the new grass revival and this stuff and folkie type stuff –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – it's not getting played, so that's when I came up with the idea of doin' Chicken Skin.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: So I started doing that.

Norie Guthrie: Because there was the, 'cause if you started around 76, there was the show before that, the Arbuckle –

David John Scribner: Arbuckle Flat, yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Right, and so did Arbuckle Flat kind of, was that –

David John Scribner: I –

Norie Guthrie: – during that kind of old program or a new program or like what was the –
David John Scribner: I know, I, I wouldn't, I couldn't really say much about Arbuckle Flat.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: All I know is it was there and I'm not even sure it was there still when I started.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah.

David John Scribner: I'm not, it might have been, but –

Norie Guthrie: I feel like it was maybe –

David John Scribner: – I can't say.

Norie Guthrie: – ****

David John Scribner: I know there was a, a band Friday afternoon that used to be sort of a progressive country thing.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, um, I'm trying to think of what else. Sunday was entirely a different programming.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: It's like, um, and I, I should say, with the bluegrass stuff, a lot of my bluegrass knowledge came from a show on KPFT called The Bluegrass Express with a guy named Tony Ullrich did.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And I used to put that on in the restaurant. Most of the time the restaurant, while, if I had any control where KTRU would be on, this is before I started listening to –

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: – and then started working at KTRU.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But, uh, Saturday mornings was always The Bluegrass Express.
Norie Guthrie: So were you, when you started at, um, KTRU, were you still working at a restaurant?

David John Scribner: Oh, yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Wow, okay.

David John Scribner: Yeah, one time I was doin', I was going to school full time, I was working at the restaurant full time, and I was doing radio four or five nights a week –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and essentially getting divorced full time, it's what I think, and everything, I'm never home.

Norie Guthrie: Right. Yeah, yeah, you would'a been super busy.

David John Scribner: And we didn't have a car, so I'm riding my bike from Richmond in the Loop to U of H –

Norie Guthrie: Right. Oh gosh.

David John Scribner: – to work –

Norie Guthrie: Uh huh.

David John Scribner: – to home and back to U of H or back to Rice.

Norie Guthrie: Wow, did you get burned out?

David John Scribner: No.

Norie Guthrie: Okay. It seems like that would be hard to do all of that.

David John Scribner: It's just, you know, when you're young, if, I, I'm finding out as I get older, I, you know, I used to be to 2 in the morning and get up at 6, you know –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – couch, I remember being up listening to The Beaker Theatre until it ended at 3 o'clock in the morning and still making my 8 o'clock class across campus in the middle of the winter and all that. No, not anymore.

Norie Guthrie: All right. So you, um, so about what year did you start Chicken Skin Music?
David John Scribner: I think it was, it's written down somewhere on the thing, I think, I, I'd, I'd have to look it up, but it was either, ss, I think it might've been 79, I think it was 79, January 8th.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: 79.

Norie Guthrie: Okay. And then, um, initially, like what was your big aim for the show? Like, ww, did you just kinda wanna have more of a, like a –

David John Scribner: Yeah, I, I wanted to have the stuff played, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: And, and it wasn't getting played anymore so.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah.

David John Scribner: And that was the whole thing, felt it was out there, it needed to be played.

Norie Guthrie: All right. Do you wanna take a moment and kinda just describe what Chicken Skin Music, what that radio show was, or it is still is, um, though you're not doing it anymore?

David John Scribner: Well, um, you know, that's, I've got a tape of that first show somewhere, but it, when it first started, it came on after a show we had called “Blast from the Past”, which we play in the album every week, and the, the night that Chicken Skin started, it was Emmylou Harris’ Elite Hotel, I believe. In the first song I ever played on the show was Tom Axton's, uh, “T’ Ain’t Nobody’s Business,” an acoustic version of that, really nice.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, you know, I played I think, probably, you know, some Dizzy Gillespie and old “Salt Peanuts,” I'm pretty sure is the song I played and, probably some Ry Cooder and, I don't know, but just, just the mix of things, and I just sort of work around 'em, work my way around through things and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and played whatever, whatever that my fancy at that particular moment.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Which always sort of had a flow to it. I mean, I mean in the sense that there, I'll go through periods where it may be more in one direction than another, you know –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – and then, you know, it could, may be a bunch of more acoustic stuff and older stuff and then I'll start getting the new stuff again, you know, this is over a couple months, and then I'll go back the other direction again. And it's just, and near the end here, when I decided it was time to, you know, look for somebody else, you know, it, it was getting to be a real chore. It used to be 3 hours, then it went down to two, and when it, believe me, it's easier to do 3 hours, then it is two simply because of the fact what you can't play, it's –

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: And the problem is there's so much stuff coming out now, it's almost impossible to keep up with it. It's just, really, there's a lot of people that you miss, it's just, and it bothers me.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: There's a lot of good people out there that need, need some aten, attention, and there's some that get attention that shouldn't get attention, but that's neither here nor there. That's why there's a dial on the radio so you can tune away from.

Norie Guthrie: So it's that, in a sense, that when you first started it, but did you think of it as an avenue to kinda promote music that people weren't hearing?

David John Scribner: Yeah, I would, I would say that, but that's always sort of been the, well, I guess, KTRU wasn't like that at first, but, I mean, that's the mission of it now is to, you know, music that's not out there –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – you know, or not getting enough, enough play. But, yeah, that's sort of what I had in mind, you know, the stuff wasn't getting played and I felt it should and so that's, that's what I did.

Norie Guthrie: Okay, um, you would also do interviews on the show and have people come in and play.

David John Scribner: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: When did you start doing that, like kind of immediately or?

David John Scribner: I, I don't know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm.

David John Scribner: I, I thought about that the other day and I have no idea. I was doing interviews with people before I was doing the show.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Like Kotkite, I'd do that and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – um, when he came to town, there's, I think there was some other people. There's, there's an interview with Warren Zevon somewhere, before I started Chicken Skin, but that wouldn't have fit in, but, uh, with Chicken Skin, although at the end it would have, but not at the beginning, but, uh, I, I don't know when I started, uh, maybe, I don't know. I'd have, you know, somebody asked me if they could come on, they could come on.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: And we used to have the pub right next door –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and so they're would be bands in the pub –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – or sometimes, like Dana Cooper, I know one time came in, I think that was the first time I had him on the show 'cause he was playing in the pub, so he came in and we talked, and that was in the DC3 timeframe.

Norie Guthrie: Okay, right, mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, we, and Preston Reed he, uh, called me up once and asked about playing in town and so I put him in touch with Tim over at Anderson Fair. And then he ended up coming in playing his, playing with, uh, playing the Fair, but also ended up staying with us because it was a last minute type deal and it was like Wednesday before Thanksgiving, that's when the show was on Wednesday, and, uh, you know, so just, uh, but he played at, did a little set on the station and then he went and played the Fair, so that was sort of like probably overkill for him. But, uh, uh, who else? Um, Roy, Roy Book Binder one time, he was coming, and Gary Coover who did “Shepherd’s Hey” over at KPFT.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: There used to be a lot of more communication, I think, between some of these stations than there, then there are now.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: I mean, than there is now, and, uh, in fact, Coover was on more or less the same time I was, that's when the show was on Tuesday, so I had a chance to move it to Wednesday, so I did, so we wouldn't be competing with each other. His show was more British Isles, or was British Isles, but I played that stuff too.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And it was sort of like, you know, these are our two chances to hear this type of stuff, why are we on at the same time?

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: And, um, so he was promote, he had brought Roy Book Binder in to play, uh, at Rockefeller's and so he had, uh, asked me if I'd have him on and I did. And Roy ended up doing his whole show, essentially, he was on for like an hour and a half or so, he did like two sets.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And it was like really interesting, and so I went to see him the next night and this, they had this group opening for him, The Banded Geckos –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – so that's how I started talking to them, and would have, and then I think I saw him again the same week, I think, opening for, uh, Nanci Griffith at Anderson Fair.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But they used to come down a lot, they are real nice, and they have, and, and they helped a lot of people out too. They'd bring, they, they would bring Blaze Foley in to play sometimes, they'd open up for him, and they'd bring Hudson and Franke, Denise Franke, and Doug Hudson in to play, and, uh, so they did a lot for this, for those people.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And between them and Gary Coover, and his group, Shepher’s Hey, they used to do a thing on Sunday where they'd bring in young songwriters and stuff, and at the end of the summer, they pick the four best or whatever, and, uh, and so, and Sean Walters was involved in that too. It's sort of interesting because Kimberly M'Carver was one of the ones that they had –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – that they considered to be really good and she ended up doing some stuff. I haven't heard much from her lately, but she put out at least three CDs. And, uh, Teresa Kolo, who had a show at KPFT for a while, she ended up with at least one CD.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: The Bentwood Rockers, that, I don't know whatever happened to them. I think they were more or less gone by the time, there was a group with a guy named Larry Dry, but by the time that that set was over, so.

Norie Guthrie: So kinda looking back over Chicken Skin music, what were some of the favorite shows that kinda stand out to you? Ones that were surprising or kinda special to you in a way?

David John Scribner: Oh, well –

Norie Guthrie: Not to discredit any others.

David John Scribner: No, no, no, well, the, The Book Binder, for sure.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, Clairseach was another one that, once again, Gary Coover, is, uh, Anne Heymann and her husband, I think, Charlie Heymann, I'm not sure if that was his name or not.

Norie Guthrie: I think, yeah, I think it is.

David John Scribner: But they, uh, that they were a husband and wife team and she played Celtic harp just gorgeously and they, they did a lot explanation of the songs and stuff, it was more of a class type show.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: That's just stuff I really, really liked, was the ones where people came down and really explained things about what they were playing and what they were doing and –

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – and, and stuff. Book Binder was the same way, uh, Lyle was nice.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, that was, once again, because of The Geckos –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – well, also Eric Taylor, because Eric Taylor had told to me I really should see Lyle Lovett if I ever got a chance, and The Geckos gave me their schedule and I read it wrong and thought they were in Bryan, and my brother was living in Bryan, and I said let's go,
we're gonna come up and see you guys this weekend and we'll go, have you go see this group, it's real good. It turned out it was the wrong weekend and it was a place that Lyle ran and Lyle was playing, so I said, "Oh, Eric Taylor said I should meet you," and, uh, said, "If you're ever in Houston, I'd be happy to have you on the show." And he came down a couple weeks later and did the show and that was real nice. Um, Albert Collins, I think that may have been, I don't remember it was an in studio or a phone interview, but that was real nice.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I liked that, uh, The Geckos were always fun to have on, uh, 'cause they always had all sorts of stuff. We did a, I think, an all live show one time for like the fifth anniversary, and I forget who all was on it, but I think they were on it and maybe, maybe The Bricks.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And Janice Rubin and Mike Mandrell.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah, yeah, I remember that one. I listened to it.

David John Scribner: Uh, uh, oh, Kimmie Rhodes, that was real nice. She and Joe Gracie came down and I, met Joe years ago when I used to like go up to Austin to, to, uh, Susan Jarrett had this company called Austin Record Distributors and she handled a lot of the small --

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: -- independent releases, so set up an appointment to go up there one day and meet with her and see if I could, 'cause we used to have to go track down these records to find 'em, and something came up, her kid was sick and she couldn't, so she sent over Bobby Earl Smith and, uh, Joe Gracie to be there when I got there. So I, so I didn't realize Bobby had been in, uh, Freda and the Fire Dogs --

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: -- and they had really impressed me when I saw them and, uh, I've been wanting to take that somethin' by them. He said, "Well, we have, there's one copy left and I'll give it to you." And, uh, and they, they're the ones that turned me on to Jimmie Dale Gilmore and The Flatlanders and that stuff. But, uh, Joe had been a DJ at KOKE and Austin which was like the first progressive country station up there, I believe, and he had lost his voice to cancer or whatever, so we all must had to, had to, a little magic pad where he'd write on it and --

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: -- and then he'd flip it up and write something else on it which was great, you know, I just, he's just a real nice guy to talk to. And, and Bobby Earl, you know, kept in
touch with him on and off through the years and, uh, he's always got some really good interesting stuff. Now that he stopped being a lawyer, I hope he starts playing more.

Norie Guthrie: So while you started doing, um, Chicken Skin Music, did you start attending more shows locally?

David John Scribner: Yeah, I think, I, well, I think, by that time, I was already a little bit better financially, so I –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – I was going to, you know, regular concerts and, and, and, and, and, and more shows.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, going back to the restaurant and this, sort of second chapter of my life, I guess, in a sense, um, and KTRU, uh, I always have KTRU on, and my wife, my future wife at that time, came running in, she worked next door from, from me, and she came running over to tell me, "Do you have, do you have KTRU on?" I said, yeah, so, okay, "They're playing Janice Ian." "Oh, I love this song," you know, that's playing "Society's Child." And, you know, so that was real, and that, that's when we, I started realizing that, you know, there was, there was something going on here and we both had similar tastes. And, uh, but so I went, I got tickets to go see Janice Ian and Tom Waits in the Music Hall.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: That really, that show was just something else and this is Waits when he was just starting out and it was just incredible.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And Gordon Lightfoot, I saw him at the Music Hall, too, that's another one that I thought he was just, this is about the time of, uh, “Sit Down Young Stranger,” or whatever, that, that song, about that, that era.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, Don Quixote, I think, it's probably the album, what, don't know if that's the name of the album, but that was on they are about that time period.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: So I go to some there and, uh, and then the country stuff would start to, was progressive country scare, or whatever was coming out, and I remember, yeah.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Come and see Willie and people like that, but, yeah, Liberty Hall and more, and then Anderson Fair started. Anderson Fair was more a deal with my wife.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, she had known, Richard Dobson was a good friend of her brothers, and my wife's and I first date was, well, a concert that I, KTRU used to do things with the pub, we'd have concerts.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And there was one that I put together, when I was doing the restaurant bit still, and with these guys who came into the restaurant a lot, Mark Towns, uh, Rick, uh, Morgan and, uh, Lindsey Pollard, and they had sort of an avant-garde Middle Eastern, Asian, you know, feel or sort of jazz type feel –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – lot of percussion and stuff and guitar and string instruments and stuff. There was really neat. So we had them and we broadcast that from the pub and that was my wife's and my first date. And she said, "Well, this friend of ours is playing it Anderson Fair next week. You should go to that." So I, we went to see Richard. And I think after that I started going there a lot more often.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. What was the scene like at the time?

David John Scribner: I, you know, I, I was just goin' and watching the show and leavin', so I didn't, you know, hang out with anybody much.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I remember talking to Eric Taylor once or twice because . . . you know, it's, you know, I really and, you know, from there, you know, Nanci Griffith and people like that. And then I started becoming really interested in stuff at Anderson Fairs and these, these were really good people, and those guys weren't getting played on the radio then.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: You know, they were just, I think, Eric's album came out about probably a little bit later and then Nanci's album, on Featherbed, also came out about that time. Those were, and who else? Don Sanders I saw. I was listening to Don Sanders. I had gone out and bought his album.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: That was probably the first local thing I bought was one of his one-sided albums or something.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, and I, I liked him a lot. He was real good and he, he had that radio show and I catch that from time to time and I saw him at the Fair once or twice. But, you know, we, us not, not having a car, I was, you know, anywhere I went, I had to walk or ride the bus.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: So, you know, it was, and, uh, from Richmond and Shepherd essentially to Anderson Fair it's a long walk, so unless we had somebody to go with us, you know, you just didn't, didn't, you know, go out that much.

Norie Guthrie: Right. Did you end up going to any of the other clubs at the time or Theodore's, Corky's?

David John Scribner: I went, there was, – oh wait, you, what was the one you just said? Theodore's?

Norie Guthrie: Theodore's, Corky's.

David John Scribner: Yeah, I went to Theodore's once or twice, there's, Smokin' Fitz would play there.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And they were over there in Westheimer, I believe, and Corky's is, I believe, where I saw, and might be where the, I have a recording of this somewhere too, of, uh, Butch and Jimmie Dale together.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: That may have come from there, uh, Blaze would play there and that's probably about it. I mentioned Sand Mountain earlier, be it New Sand Mountain, uh, I missed The Family Hand and that stuff totally.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. How was, what was Blaze Foley like as a performer?

David John Scribner: Who? Blaze?

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: He was great and he was just, I mean, he's, he's been one of my favorites from, from when I first saw him.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: You know, he just really, and just, and last time I saw him was probably shortly before he got killed, and he was doing, uh, a CD release thing at the Austin Outhouse and, uh, or, sorry, a cassette tape recording at the Austin Outhouse, and, uh, I, I went by there and caught the end of it. I was helping a friend move at that, that weekend and I managed to catch the last, last bit of it.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: It was pretty good.

Norie Guthrie: Did you have other favorites in Houston that you liked to see?

David John Scribner: No, not, not so much, I met, or mentioned Don, um, they, uh, the, I think the people I liked were the people I started seeing at the Fair who would come in from Austin. More like the Hudson and Frankie –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and Jane Gillman and Stephanie Beardsley.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, and Beardsley, I, I don't quite remember what her last name is, but they were real good and I'd, you know, I remember sometimes we'd go over and record them on Sundays at KTRU –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – Sunday afternoons or, in Jane and Stephanie's case, one time and I don't know whose apartment it was, I think it was probably Jane's future husband or somethin', and, uh, you know, Sunday morning after I did my show at KUHF, I'd have a reel to reel night car, I'd come and hang it over and came over there and recorded 'em.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Some things I'd have recorded at our house, like the Smith Sisters were coming into town. And, uh, record companies are real good about the, the small labels I should say, the one's like Flying Fish and Alligator or, and, uh, Rounder were real good, and Rounder, I mean, uh, Flying Fish and Alligator were more about trying to get people in touch with you to, to do live stuff or to do interviews and stuff.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And I did that whenever I could, you know, and for a while I was recording things at Anderson Fair and with the, the OTARI, I drag it down there and set it up in one of the rooms and record this stuff.

Norie Guthrie: So, yeah, can you talk a little bit about recording those live shows?

David John Scribner: Well, essentially, depending upon where it was, the stuff that I did at home or whatever was totally different –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – you know, we'd have two mics, but from the Fair, at the Fair, Tim usually had, we'd have a, we had a room set up that I could sit in and we had the lines from there and I could plug 'em and, and mess with it a little bit. I wouldn't have to do too much tweaking, but essentially it'd be a live feed.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I might have to adjust the volume a little bit. Um, the broadcast, we did a couple live shows from Anderson Fair, uh, Preston Reed being, I think, the first one and then, uh, Tom Russell and Nanci Griffith being the second one and those were done with the, uh, everything being set up, uh, essentially, what is now in, what is essentially now backstage.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, we'd have the reel to reel and a little board maybe there, or somethin' to tweak things, and then we'd run the cable up to the roof –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and have the Marti up there. We didn't use phone lines. We used, we had a Marti, uh, little radio transmitter thing and we'd have one on top of Sid Rich –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and the other one there, we'd have to line 'em up and, you know, I didn't have, I didn't do that part, it was usually Stan Barber or Michael –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – or Dingbat and people like that would set that up and I'd worry about the reel to reel stuff and things like that.
Norie Guthrie: Yeah, there's that Tom Russell, Nanci Griffith, the Tom Russell had survived, but not the Nanci Griffith.

David John Scribner: The Nanci Griffith is in the garage.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: Or in the box. It's actually in the box that you're getting.

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay, great, great.

David John Scribner: And so does Tom have a bad word in it?

Norie Guthrie: Nn, I cannot remember.

David John Scribner: Yeah, there, there was something funny that happened there, like he tossed it in as a joke at the end of it or somethin', or at the beginning of the second set, or now that they were not recorded, you didn't know that we were, it was still probably against it.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah.

David John Scribner: And that band was, that was, that may have, I think, that was probably just a duo, I don't think Fats Kaplin was with him on that tour. He was with him on one –

Norie Guthrie: Mm.

David John Scribner: – were they had the three of 'em.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But that somebody that Anderson Fair really helped, I think, a lot –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – was Tom Russell, and then once he got big, it's like, no, now I'm at the Duck, you know, and.

Norie Guthrie: Um, so kind of doing both the live shows and, um, doing Chicken Skin, what kind of, what had, what did you end up kinda learning about Houston folk, while you were, folk music while you were doing that?

David John Scribner: I just learned that there's a lot of good people out there and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – and in the, and in, and not necessarily, and not now, I'm not reflecting on people now –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – but back then, people didn't, but weren't able to sit there and set up their home studio and record a CD and put it out, you know –

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: – and burn themselves before gigs like they can now.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, so there were a lot of people who, I think, never got recorded that, that should've been recorded.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, and, and, uh, I mean, you'd be listening 'em, why aren't you doing anything? You know, why isn't this out there? And it's, it's the thing that's always sort of bothered me about, you know, back then was that, you know, there's a lot of good music that never ended up anywhere, you know?

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: I'd, I'm glad that Lomax's went around and did what they did and I forget the lady's name in Wisconsin that did the same thing with a lot of the stuff up in Wisconsin.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, a lot of very, there's a lot of stuff from my mother's hometown, Rice Lake, that, uh, was recorded. Helene Stratman-Thomas, I think, is her name –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – uh, in fact, uh, Rounder put out a CD about, uh, folk music from Wisconsin or something that was, that was really neat and there are people that, you know, I showed it to my mother at one point, so "I know her, I know them" and I'm thinking they're now like The Bentwood Rockers and people like that up there. It's just, uh, you, and, and there's been stuff like that all over the country.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But, of course, we're talking Houston –
Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: – So I digress. But, um, you know, there's just a lot of stuff that never got recorded and stuff, you know, just and the meant, the blue stuff out of it like that I got so excited when I came down here and I found out Lightnin’ Hopkins lived here and I got to see him a couple times –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – that just made my, 'cause he is one of the guys that I really, really liked up there.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, saw John Lee Hooker at Liberty Hall, that's another one, and, uh, Big Mama Thornton. You know, it's, it's a shame that some of these places don't exist anymore.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Or maybe it's, maybe it's a good thing because of the fire codes, I mean, you know, some of the rooms that we'd hear music in, you know, –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – are, at, at anywhere, like up in Austin, even The Broken Spoke, I mean, heaven forbid there's ever a fire there, you know, it's, uh, you know, but you can't aff, uh, the problem with, I think, house concerts might be the next, I mean, they're probably gonna be, but there's a lot of house concerts now, we may have been, beginning to think we're getting near the end of that era again.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: All the different phases we go through because a lot of people did house concerts have stopped doing them. There used to be, you know, house concerts all over the place, but those sort of remind me of the old rent parties that you did, that you'd have, you'd have a party and maybe somebody playing and you toss a few dollars in to help pay the rent.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. So do you, who do you think of as somebody that you wish, um, could have gotten a little bit more, um, who could have been recorded that wasn't from the Houston scene, should've gotten a little bit more, uh, focus placed on them?

David John Scribner: Sean Walters. I, I really wish that somethin' would have happened with him.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: Because he is, he is so good and, and, and I guess with The Louvers he's done that thing.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Rex is somebody else, Rex Bell and that, you know, you see an amount of talent that's just, it's just there, you know, but –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – I, I don't know, yeah, I would've liked to have seen The Bentwood Rockers do something, you know, or, or for that matter, The Bricks. The Geckos did CDs on their own, but –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – you know, I think if they could have, I mean, I, it would've been nice to see something get out there on a major label, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Denise Franke, by all means, I mean, yeah, she's got three independent CDs, but, I mean, or, or her and Doug, I mean, they were just the best as far as I'm concerned. And, and, you know, they had the one album when they were in, uh, Beacon Street Union, but that again is a homemade album, same thing. The only one Kimberly, uh, not Kimberly, um, Jane Gilman and, sl, I don't, necesses, I guess, Stephanie, well, I don't know if she was still in the band or if she was in that band or not, but, uh, Eagle Bone Whistle, which John Hagan, who plays with Lyle, came out of.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: They, now they were on Philo or Fretless, I forget which one, but it's one of the Rounder Group, and that album was really good and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – I, I, I wish that they could have gotten some nationwide, you know, stuff.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But, you know, a lot of these, you know, you've got the stuff in one area that's real good and it's, sometimes it just doesn't reach that breakup. Same thing with Northern Minnesota. There's a lot of good people up there that just never –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – you know, got the exposure they needed.

Norie Guthrie: So who were you not surprised that ended up getting more exposure?

David John Scribner: Well, Lyle obviously.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, Nanci. Eric, I'm glad he, he could have some stuff out nationwide, so I was real happy about that –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – 'cause he's, he's another, one of the really talented people, he and Nanci both, and, uh, I'm trying to think. Those are the ones that really, didn't really surprise me at all.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: You know, that those blues guys, they don't, you know, they all sort of made it, I mean, in a sense, I mean, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. Seems like there might be, it might be easier, yeah, I could be completely wrong, but, you know, if you're somebody who plays, if, if you are adept at playing the guitar, that you could probably play in a different variety of bands even if, but as a singer-songwriter, sometimes you're just kind of, it's you by yourself and –

David John Scribner: Yeah, well –

Norie Guthrie: – so there’s not the same kind of functionality –

David John Scribner: It's –

Norie Guthrie: ****

David John Scribner: It's interesting because sometimes people, it's interesting seeing people solo and, and with a band.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: It like, well, Slaid Cleaves, when he played solo, or when he's got a full-blown band, like he did for the Broke Down tour –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – I mean, it was entirely different, it was, it was still really good, uh, both were really good, but they were different, you know, feel to it, different vibe or whatever.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, there are a lot of good instrumental people that, uh, I just love hearing with other people, you know, when they, when, when they're good by themselves, but they sit in with somebody else, it gives it a, it gives 'em another chance to go in a different direction sometimes.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Sort of that way with jazz a lot, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah, you can move around.

David John Scribner: Yeah and do things.

Norie Guthrie: From group to group, yeah, yeah. Um, so what other, um, DJ work have you done beyond, you did the KTRU and –

David John Scribner: And, and, and, uh, still do a show in Bryan.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And I'm still, I, I still need to do some more things at KTRU. I'm gonna start subbing some and, uh, told I can do Chicken Skin whenever I want. I'm probably gonna do it and my son's gonna sub, I think, a couple times this summer and I'll probably do that too, uh, at the beginning of the summer before –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – September comes and I head to the great White North. Um, I'm sorry. What was I saying?

Norie Guthrie: Um, I was just kind of asking you about –

David John Scribner: Oh, besides –

Norie Guthrie: – other you do.

David John Scribner: I, I do a show in Bryan still once a month and it's like bluegrass folk blues –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – just like Chicken Skin called “Random Roots” and I do it once a month, so that's something I can still continue to do –
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – even if I have to mail it in.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: And I may, I may, I'm probably gonna be doing that. Uh, I did a few subs at KPFT, but that was it. That's essentially the, just KUFH or, essentially, jazz and I did “The Big Band Show” there for a long time.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, I did “The Blues Show” on KTRU for a while just to keep it all live and I really enjoyed doing it and that, but the timeslot it got moved to, it's way past my bedtime and it's, I just can't, can't do that. But, there's just, there's just so much music out there, it's, that's the whole problem and I hope to get caught up listening to some of it now because I, it's, yeah. I went to Minneapolis this, sorry, Bemidji, this week and I picked up four CDs, so it's like.

Norie Guthrie: So since you've been doing DJ work, since the late 70s, middle 70s, actually, what has changed? Can you talk about just that kind of change, that process over time, how, how is it changed?

David John Scribner: Well, for one thing, the language thing has, I think, gotten more strict. It, well, it's sort of went through a period where you could get by with certain songs and that now you can't, uh, but, and that, that's, and I understand that, but it's a shame some of the stuff that you, you can't play. They frown on double entendres, um, but the, just the method of playing things, I mean, now, in a, you know, it used to be all vinyl, and I remember when CDs came out you got excited, "Oh, we've got to buy CDs at the station, I get to play CDs."

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And at KTRU, we, we had the, what we used to play CDs with was a Walkman –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and, or, or a Discman, I guess it was, and somebody stole that it one point so we didn't have that for a while. But now, you know, vinyls coming back I guess, but it's just, it's an entirely different. When, you know, I, I think it, in a sense, some of the things are harder to do with CDs than they were with, with vinyl. That's my viewpoint. I mean, queuing is, yeah, it's a real tight queue, but if you want to, I don't know, if you want, especially with a live cuts it's a real pain because if you want to do like a cross fade on a CD, if it's a live thing, it will spin at it and that's it, you know, you know, but continuing clapping –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – starts the next cut, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: And if you want to fade it down while you're bringing up somethin' else, you can't. CDs are also, I think, in a sense, you know, when you put one in the deck, you know, but when you, the one that's on the bottom is the one that plays, you know, and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and I'm one of these people who when, when, I, I, some, I, I know some DJs who have, they have everything planned out. You know, I may have things fairly well, fair, fairly planned out, but, you know, I may have this CDs that I'm gonna play. But if I have 50 CDs with me, I may play 20 of 'em, but I may not even know what cuts some gonna play. And sometimes you're playing somethin' that reminds you of somethin' else and, with CDs it's a lot harder to do a quick pop it in and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and queue it up. Vinyl, you could do it a lot faster. You could, if, if you were doin' it all the time, you could drop that needle on the track, beginning of a track –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – real easily.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. So can you describe that process of, of how the CDs are organized? I can't really imagine what that's, you drop them in?

David John Scribner: No, no, with the CD, no, no, I'm just saying with the CD you have, you know, you open the deck and you put it in there.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: But if you're in a hurry and you failed to take the CD out that's underneath it –

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: – not that anybody would ever do that, no, not with vinyl.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: And then, you know, you can't tell and you forget what's in what deck –
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – which, you know, in my case, I'm going 90 miles an hour, um, you know. In, in my case, I'd be putting, usually I'd be putting my playlist into the, my laptop for posting the, for Folk DJ –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and sending the record companies and then you're also putting into the station computer for going out to record companies –

Norie Guthrie: Why?

David John Scribner: – I mean, for the streaming thing.

Norie Guthrie: What is the, so going out to record companies, can you just, what, what do you mean by –

David John Scribner: I mean –

Norie Guthrie: – just so that –

David John Scribner: No, I mean –

Norie Guthrie: ****

David John Scribner: – for the streaming purposes is what the station computer does.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: It tells how many, what was playing at what time and then they can tell how many people were listening and –

Norie Guthrie: Okay, I got it, yeah, mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and I could see at that. I, my play list, I would send the playlist out to record companies –

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – and stuff, so that they would know, you know, that they're getting played.

Norie Guthrie: Oh.

David John Scribner: Or, in some cases, artists you know, you know, but do their own promotion.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, and that's what was nice about Folk DJ, was, was still nice about it, but is that, that, you know, the artists can see who's playing 'em and who's, you know, not playing 'em. It's easy to set up a filter. I did that for a while for a couple friends of mine that I was, you know, trying to help and I'd then who was playing 'em and what stations, so if they wanted to tell somethin' to 'em they could.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: It would save them that problem.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: But, uh, you know, you, you also here, you know, people say something's really good, you ought to check this out, you know, 'cause you, you don't have time to listen to everything. Sometimes, you know, you look at a CD and the cover may turn you in a different direction, well, I'll set this one aside for later. One of the ones my wife rescued was Cheryl Wheeler's first album, or first one on vinyl, but –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – you know, just, and they had a picture of her and all these drawings and stuff, like remove this, remove this, and, you know, it's like how to fix it up and touch it up and Photoshop and this is what needs to be done, except it was a plain picture. And once you listen to Cheryl Wheeler, you think that's the funniest thing in the world, but when you first look at it, what is this stuff, and then, yeah, sometimes the cover art just turns you off, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, but somebody says, "It's really good." Well, "then I'll try it." You know, and sometimes I think, I don't know, I just.

Norie Guthrie: So do you, um, what kind of changes in the past in the past few years, with the rise of streaming, do you see any changes for the artists?

David John Scribner: I, I don't know as far as the artists go. For, for me, it irritates the living daylights out of me.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Yeah, it's nice to be able to sit here and listen to the station in Grand Rapids if I want to. It's nice to be able to listen if it's, you know, my wife to be able to listen to me in Bryan.
Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Or when we were HD and didn't have an HD tuner at home, she could listen to me on the computer.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, your family and friends can listen or for, you know, if you find a station somewhere you like to listen to you can stream, but also when certain things happen, like for instance, you know, Bob Dylan turning 60 and people saying, you know, this guy, we can do a whole show of his music, we ought to do it –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – you can't do that anymore. Um, you, you, you know, you're limited to how many tracks per hour from a box set or whatever that you can play because of the streaming thing because the, I think, it's the record companies are afraid that people will tape, you know, digitally download it and not buy this stuff because they can get it all on the thing.

Norie Guthrie: Oh.

David John Scribner: There's probably something to be said from that viewpoint, but.

Norie Guthrie: Okay, so you, okay, so you can't, if, if your radio program is being streamed, you cannot, um, play too many songs from –

David John Scribner: Right.

Norie Guthrie: – one artist.

David John Scribner: It's like two cuts from, uh, from a recording in an hour, or three from a recording or box set in 2 hours, and it also goes for artists, so no more than two in a row, uh, I think is the basic kind of thing of it now.

Norie Guthrie: Oh, wow, so if, let's say that someone is in the studio with you and they're playing –

David John Scribner: And they're playing live, is entirely different.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: If it's, if it's, uh, Joe Palooka and he did a do it yourself CD at home and burned himself and he says you can play this as much as you want, then you can.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.
David John Scribner: ’Cause he owns the recordings.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: Who owns the recording, the, uh, if it's at leased recording, and this came up recently, now you, once again, you have to own the recording, like a lot of, like a, there's a lot of independent artists, I guess, who will, you know, uh, a label will put it out, but they don't buy the recording, they lease it from 'em. They can put this out for 2 years or something like that –

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: – and, uh, and then they can renegotiate or whatever.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: In that case, the record company can't give you permission to, to play as much as you want from it.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. Has this kind of restricted your ability to promote certain artists?

David John Scribner: Yeah, I would say it, it, it does, you know, somebody comes up with a new CD sometimes and that's probably the reason they do it, but like if you have somebody to come in town that's not been here for a while, it, it's nice to be able to play stuff by 'em, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: You know, when, when, especially these days where I think people are getting away from radio. I think a lot of it is going to, you know, Spotify and Pandora and stuff like that.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Uh, and, and my wife says, you know, you know at work I can put in like Slaid Cleaves and similar artists or somethin' and, you know, you can make here little radio station –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – just pulling people that are similar to that and play it, you know, uh, yeah, if you don't have a radio on that, you know. So I think, I think radio is, is probably lessening some and, you know, used to be people would listen in their cars all the time and at home, now it's more cars, I think –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – and not too many people listen at home, I don't think. I don't, I don't know. It's, I'd like to see the demographics on that. I think it's lessening.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah, I mean, there's all, and there's also satellite radio.

David John Scribner: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah. What are your opinions on that?

David John Scribner: I, you know, I got, I had, I think I once had, I had XM –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – not sure if I had Sirius, whichever one Dylan had his radio show on, I think it was XM before they merged and, and I enjoyed some of that stuff, but I got tired of it after a while.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But it's interesting, I was driving with my dad one time and I could put it on 40s or 50s and –

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: – you know, or 40s, and he'd like that, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: But my dad had diverse tastes anyway and he was, you know, but it would be nice for him, you know, –

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: – like when we went to his battleship reunion, I think I had it on 40s stuff and stuff like this, we're driving to Alabama and just.

Norie Guthrie: Um, so if you look back over kinda Houston, specifically, what changes have you seen, seen with the, um, with, within Houston folk music? Like starting in the 70s or probably in the mid-70s when you started DJ'ing?

David John Scribner: I, you know, there used to be, I think there used to be a, a lot more people out there. And now part of this is I don't get out much anymore, so I'm not that, I know like I'll, oh, I forget the name of the place it is, but there's a place out off of Highway 6 that's got music –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – and I've, I've never been out there, but I've got a friend who sits out there and sits in sometimes and, and I see there, you know, I've seen schedules from time to time, so like there's probably a lot more people out there. I mean, there are a lot of new people out there that I don't know about, um, I'll, but it seems to me, there used to be a lot, I mean, Anderson Fair use to be able to have people, you know, four or five nights a week and it'd be different people every night and they'd all be local.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I don't see that happening anymore. Now, granted, they're not open every night. Uh, I, I know the Ducks open every night, I'm not sure how, since I don't really go out much anymore, I don't really look at the schedules that much, so there may very well be –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – that same type thing, but if you look at, and you go back, you've got Bill and Lucille, okay, you've got Vince Bell at the same time, you've got John Grimaudo who is a, that's another guy who should have really done somethin'.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I mean, he's one of the best guitar players I've ever heard and, uh, he's on one of Eric's albums.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Maybe two, he's on one of Lucinda's albums, he is in, and maybe Nanci's, he's just one of the best guitar players and he's just a house painter there in Rockford these days. And, uh, oh, I'm starting to think, I'm, I'm losing names, you know, I see the thing and I forget. Of course, John Vandiver who we talked about earlier –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – uh, when we weren't recording, he, you know, he, uh, Shake and Dana, you know, there's Shake by themselves, by himself, or Dana by him, by themselves, or Shake and Dana together. Shake had a real big following down here and still probably does, I think, he's still does pretty well.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah, yeah, Tim says he always –

David John Scribner: Yeah, and Bill said –

Norie Guthrie: – and always fills –

David John Scribner: Yeah.
Norie Guthrie: – those Anderson Fair when he plays.

David John Scribner: Uh, but it one time, yeah, Rockefellers and he had women goin’ nuts in the audience and –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and, uh, yeah, I'm just, oh, Reb Smith, Bruce Mcelhenny, you know, they were, there were tons of people down here when, you know, like I say, I'm, usually I can remember everything, but today I'm not.

Norie Guthrie: That's okay, um, so what did you think, if there was such a concentration of talent what, what do you think happened?

David John Scribner: I, I don't, I think in some case, – oh and, um, Steve and Franci, Steve Jarrard and Franci Files.

Norie Guthrie: Right.

David John Scribner: Uh, Dog Tooth Violet, see now I'm startin' to go again.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah.

David John Scribner: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: There you go, yeah.

David John Scribner: Uh, but I, I, I, in some cases people, well, this sounds bad, but they grew up and started having families and couldn't make a living at it.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: You know, I mean, it's, I don't know how anybody does it, you know, I mean, there's some real good people who just can't afford to do stuff anymore, you know.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: And, uh, it's, I, I, I think that's got a lot to do with it, you know, that's why I'm saying there's probably a bunch of young people out there. I went, when I went out to, uh, Millbend Coffee House and saw Ms. Brown to You which is Mary Catherine Reynolds, who used to be around Austin and Louise Goldberg, and they had some local person who'd never performed in public before playing with somebody, I mean, just singin’ –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.
David John Scribner: – you know, and she, she, I don't think she did any original stuff that she did, but her voice was really good. She did a Cranberry's cover.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: That I remember, but I mean, you know, so you've got these people out there, but they need the encouragement, they need to have a place they can go and play.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: Um, open mic nights, I guess, are, are, I would say, are probably really good for stuff like that. And then like the Fair, they have the, you know, Writers in the Wound, or not Writers in the Round, but the, uh, you know, Ken and Wayne everything, where they bring in two or three people –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – you know, who happen to be somewhere in the, sometimes they're local people or sometimes they're people who were comin' through and, and are willin' to play, you know, for not as much as they'd normally get. And, uh, you know, that, that helps, but, I, I don't see that much of a, a thing out there, and this is probably me being old and not being aware of what's going on.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm. Um, so now you have, you know, you've walked away from Chicken Skin in a sense, right?

David John Scribner: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: Recently, um, so what are you going to do next?

David John Scribner: I don't know. I've, I've got, once I retire, which hopefully is in a few months, I intend to go back to Minnesota for a while and spend some of the time up there. I may actually, I'm trying to figure out if I can play violin again except now try to play a different instrument instead of violin. Um, just, I don't know, I, I, I, I just want to and, and just sit back and be able to listen to music and enjoy it instead of, and I shouldn't say 'and enjoy it,' I mean, I still enjoy it, but, I mean, I can listen to it without trying to figure out if it, I don't have to be watching for words.

Norie Guthrie: Oh, okay.

David John Scribner: You know, I can just sit back instead of going, "Wait. What did they say there? Go back and." I, I don't know. I, I just wanna, and enjoy being out of the big city for a change.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.
David John Scribner: You know, it's nice that, you know, there's a place up there that has music and like, and they start up one night a week and there's this, well, they have an open mic night, but I've never been there, but like there, on Friday night, last Friday, they started at 6 and ended around 9:30, well, that's good hours for me. Especially during the summer, I, I don't have to worry about driving at night. I hate driving at night, so it's –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – yeah. Just relax and, and see what I can do. I don't know, I've got a lot of books to read too.

Norie Guthrie: All right. Well, thank you so much for coming and, um, spending your time on a Friday –

David John Scribner: Thank you.

Norie Guthrie: – to talk to you a little bit.

David John Scribner: I enjoyed it.

Norie Guthrie: Um, just to make sure, is there anything else that you would like to talk about? Or you feel like something that was skipped over?

David John Scribner: Yeah, I, I thought of something at one point, but now, of course, I've, um, I dealt, I don't remember it, but I think also a lot of it has to do with the fact that Houston has changed so much.

Norie Guthrie: Okay.

David John Scribner: I mean, you've got people from all over the place. It's just huge compared to what it was when I, when I first moved here.

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: I, I don't, I’d be curious, I think it's probably under a million people back in 73 or 71, whenever it was that I got down here. First concert in Houston, Johnny Winter, BB King and Curved Air at Hofheinz Pavilion on Mother's Day 1971 for $3.00.

Norie Guthrie: That is cheap.

David John Scribner: Yeah, but I've, I've been going through my old Liberty Hall posters –

Norie Guthrie: Mm hmm.

David John Scribner: – and, and, uh, things like that, but I have regular, my son goes, "$3.00 for Jerry Jeff Walker?” You know, this is, you know, the price you paid for things back then and
then, you know, now it's, what does Springsteen cost these days? You know, what did he cost back then?

Norie Guthrie: I don't know. I couldn't afford to go to Springsteen now.

David John Scribner: Yeah.

Norie Guthrie: But he was probably 3 or 4 or 5 bucks.

David John Scribner: But you still get your money's worth.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah, I'm sure.

David John Scribner: Yeah, he doesn't do 45, two 45-minute sets which I've noticed, some artists are real good at knowing when 45 minutes is over.

Norie Guthrie: Yeah. I agree. Um, all right, um, well, thank you for coming in, um, I really appreciate it.