

Doug and Eve Allyn Transcript (1:55:12)

Kirstine Furtaw: My name is Kirstine Furtaw. I am in the Alpena Room. It is May 28<sup>th</sup> and I am getting ready to conduct an interview with Doug and Eve Allyn for the Oral History Music Project at the Alpena County Library. Welcome.

Doug Allyn: Thank you.

Eve Allyn: Thank you.

KF: I wanted to start out first with, um, talking a little bit about your early years.

DA: Sure.

KF: Um, maybe I could start with you first Doug and then we'll move on to you Eve? About how you got started in music.

DA: Uh, I started music at the age of four. Um, my mother signed me up with the Alvin Ash Music Studio which was downtown on Chisholm Street in those days, uh, the year would've been 1948 – 49 something like that. Um, and I started learn- I started taking guitar lessons. Then, by age six, um, I was touring with the Alvin Ash Revue, um, Mr. Ash in addition to running his music store also put on shows in neighboring towns. We went to Onaway, Oscoda, whatever, you know, anything in the area mostly playing in little country halls. Alpena had no TV in those days. This was a road show and I was age six and, uh... Want to know what the whole show was? I can give you that.

KF: I'd like to hear it.

DA: OK. The whole show was I was appearing with a m- in my act, a magician named Edgar Stephan was the preceding act. About halfway through his show I would come on stage and blunder around in the back amongst the instruments making noise. Ed would stop his act and pretend that I was disrupting it and tell me to get lost, uh, at which point I would burst into tears and say I just want to play the guitar and he would say, "Beat it kid. You're too little to play the guitar." And I was little. You know, I'm six.

KF: Right.

DA: Um, and, uh, so after, so I would beg and plead and he would hand me a ukulele and I would say, "No, I want to play the big guitar." "Uh, beat it, kid, you're too small to play the big guitar." At which point, he would ask the audience if they wanted to actually see me play the big guitar. They, of course, always did. Uh, so Ed took the ukulele which was his instrument. I took a full-size Spanish guitar which was actually my instrument –

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: - and then we would play Muskrat Ramble or something- tear into something and bring the house down. That was our show. I did two songs a night. I got 50 cents a song which made me actually pretty well paid for a first grader.

KF: Right.

DA: You know. So, that was the beginning of my musical career.

KF: OK. And so how long did you keep playing with that group?

DA: I did that until the third grade. I should mention though that if we're going to talk about early history, um, my mom was a big band singer in Alpena before I started to play. She played with the Skeets Aubrey Quintet. They played at a club that I think – now, we're talking World War II-

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: -alright, cause I obviously was not hanging out in the bars then.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Yet. Um, but they played in a club that was upstairs, I think, over what became Vaughn's Furniture?

KF: Well, you know, Cindy and I were talking about that we were wondering if it was, um, above Alpena Furniture, possibly?

DA: Might've been. Might've been.

KF: The Trianon Hall was a pretty popular dance hall at that time. So, that's a possibility?

DA: That's gotta be the one then.

KF: Yeah.

DA: Yeah.

KF: I'm thinking so. Yeah, so, uh, so she was a part of, you said, the Skeets-?

DA: The Skeets Aubrey Quintet.

KF: OK.

DA: She sang with them. I have a record of hers that they cut back in those days someplace in my collection.

KF: Now, that would've been pretty unusual at that time, wouldn't it? To have a recording? Of your band?

DA: I think so. Um, that's before my time, kiddo.

KF: Right. Right.

DA: Yeah. Uh, but I've got the records.

KF: Yeah.

DA: So that's pretty much proof of that.

KF: I think it kind of speaks to maybe how popular the band was or that they would actually make a recording of it.

DA: Uh, yeah, well this wasn't – this would be on acetate which would've been in a local recording studio-

KF: OK.

DA: -either here or in Bay City because I think Skeets was from Bay City. That's my recollection.

KF: OK.

DA: But his bass player, Ed Perkins, was my guitar teacher. He taught at Ed Asher's studio. Um, originally from Tennessee. Played upright bass and played guitar.

KF: So, did your mom, uh, she was a singer.

DA: Yes.

KF: Did she play any instruments as well?

DA: Uh, she played keyboards but to amuse herself.

KF: OK.

DA: Uh, she never played onstage. She was a singer.

KF: OK.

DA: And my grandmother also was a singer. She was heavy into gospel. She toured the south in the twenties and thirties under the name – her stage name was Opal Warren.

EA: Opal Warren.

DA: Uh, and, uh, my uncle Sterling also in gospel music. Had his own radio station out of Covington, Kentucky for many years. Uh, so it was kind of like the family business – sort of. Although, gee, I was never drawn into gospel music for whatever. Rock and roll seduced me.

EA: (chuckle)

DA: Although we're talking 1948. Rock and roll hadn't been invented yet so, gosh, I missed that.

KF: Right, right. So, so your mom – she would've been playing though, uh, primarily it would've been like jazz standards-

DA: Oh, yeah.

KF: -that kind of music at that time.

DA: Oh, yeah. Sure. Yes. Yep.

KF: Right, OK. Now, was there anybody else in your family that was involved in music besides your mom and yourself.

DA: Umm.

KF: Was your dad involved?

DA: No, not at all.

KF: OK.

DA: I'm just casting about really quickly. No. Nobody else. Just us.

KF: OK. OK. Alright.

DA: Yeah.

KF: Um, did you express an interest in taking up the guitar at 4 ½ or did your mom just-

DA: I got spanked for riding my tricycle into the street. My mom felt really bad about that because, of course, she didn't know it was child abuse at the time. She just thought she was spanking me. Um, but and so she said she would give me a present to make up for this and I asked for a guitar. I was four years old. I asked for a guitar. And she, of course, said this was serious business and if you're going to do that then you're going to have lessons, etc. Fine. Sign me up. And, um, I was actually taking lessons at five.

KF: Mm-hmm. Did you remember, um, being drawn to music? At, you know, obviously if you asked for a guitar you had probably been listening to your mom?

DA: Oh, my mom was absolutely, I mean, there was music around the house just about 24 hours a day. Seriously. It's on all the time. It's like water, you know. Um, but, yeah, I've always been attracted to it and I can still remember walking into Ashe's music store and I'm just a little kid. But I remember walking in there looking at the instruments and thinking what each one would sound like if I could play it. Uh, and ten years later I could play it. A lot of them.

KF: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

DA: Growing up in Alpena but that's more to this story. But that was when I started at 5. And at Ashe's.

KF: And then you said that in third grade you had to stop.

DA: In third grade I broke my arm.

KF: OK.

DA: Twice and, uh, which pretty much- I couldn't play for a better part of a year because of that and-

KF: Was it your right arm?

DA: Right arm, yeah.

KF: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

DA: And, uh, at the end of that period my folks had gotten a divorce and I just kind of lost interest in the music thing. I mean, I'd been doing it at that point for three or four years.

KF: Right.

DA: Which is a long time when you're a little kid.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: And it involved riding on the bus to a lot of little towns and I was the youngest one in the show. Nobody to talk to. Um, and frankly that got pretty old and I grew up knowing what my grandmother had already warned me about. About a life in music. Uh, she said it's a lonely life. You're on the road all the time and you will end up alone.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Great lady, my grandmother.

KF: Thankfully you met another musician but that's later on in the story

DA: Later on in the story. Yeah.

EA: (chuckle)

KF: Yeah. Right. Um, OK, so you got back into music though at what point?

DA: Probably eighth grade.

KF: OK.

DA: I started – I got the bug again. Rock and roll was starting to show up and, uh, you could get a radio bounce- now mind you, during this era, the only radio station is WATZ.

KF: OK.

DA: And they played a really big variety as it happened, uh, the manager of the station, uh, Drew McClay was a family friend. Uh, his son Billy and I went to school together. Uh, so I got to know Drew and the radio station from again- growing up. Um, and Alpena played a lot of really big variety of music some of which I've been tracking down ever since. You know, because the only place they played – you'd ever hear this stuff was on WATZ. They played polkas. They had the, um, um, Austin Deadman radio show.

KF: OK

DA: Called “Down Memory Lane”.

KF: OK.

DA: Austin Deadman was a local musician. Uh, he had his own sh-

KF: That's a big, uh, family name – musical family name.

DA: Oh, yes, yes. Sure. Absolutely.

KF: Mm, hmm. Yeah.

DA: And, uh, yeah, Bill and Karen Emerson are his step-kids or something. I don't know. It's complicated. But I remember, I remember that show. I remember listening to music on that show.

KF: And what kind of music did he play?

DA: He played old standards. I mean, it was called “Down Memory Lane”. He was playing and it was strictly him on piano.

KF: Oh, so it was live-

DA: Oh, absolutely-

KF: In the studio..

DA: Sure. Yeah.

KF: Oh, I didn't know they were doing that kind of- oh, OK.

DA: They absolutely did that and years later, or a few years after that, I was playing live in that studio.

KF: OK.

DA: They had a whole set up out at the radio station complete with a grand piano and, uh, uh, mikes permanently set up where you could bring in a band and they would do live broadcasts.

KF: Oh, OK. I didn't know that about WATZ back then.

DA: This town was jumping.

KF: Yeah.

DA: But part of it was that we were so isolated. There was literally nothing else. I was hearing rock and roll on a bounce from WLAC-Nashville which was a national station then. 50,000 watts, I think. Um, and they played early rhythm and blues so by the time later when I got into rhythm and blues I played in bands with- where I was the only white guy in the band- but they couldn't call a song that I didn't already know. Growing up in this town was magical in a lot of ways but part of it is the isolation. We were so far from everything else. So when you picked an option. It might be the only one you had.

KF: Right. So, you were able to get that radio station.

DA: Yup.

KF: Um, from all the way from Nashville.

DA: Yup.

KF: But that was your only exposure to that kind of music, really?

DA: Pretty much, yeah. They weren't playing rock and roll on WATZ yet. They did though. And, uh, fairly – there was a DJ named Skeets Deno who was really, uh, uh, a major figure in this town in those days. Who else was there? You know, again, we were pretty isolated. But he picked up on rock and roll early and he was playing that early.

KF: OK. So, that must have just felt like – when you were listening to this radio station from Nashville-

DA: Yeah.

KF: - all the way up here in Alpena. It must've felt – or were you in Black River at that time?

DA: Well, both times. Yeah, I was in both places.

KF: Yeah, it must've just felt like, “Wow, there's this whole world out there that – that you didn't...”

DA: Well, it's-you know it's - you're not on Mars here- but it was just harder being by that time I was already playing seriously, uh, because I was playing in bands when I was in high school. Professionally. You know. Out in the clubs getting paid. And I was not the only one. We can

come back to that a little bit later but there was a whole community of musicians that grew up in this town.

KF: Right.

DA: Uh, and it was very open. Younger players would be coached by older players as they came in and, uh, that hasn't really changed that much.

KF: Well, hello. Carole just joined us. Carole can you introduce yourself for the...

CC: Absolutely. I'm Carole Cadarette and I'm here for the interview with Doug and Eve Allyn.

DA: Hi. I called you earlier.

CC: Good morning. I've been in town a long time.

DA: Oh, OK.

KF: Yeah. Well, we were just talking a little bit about, um, Doug's early years and we'd kind of gotten up to the point where he got back into music in about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

DA: Yeah.

KF: And, um, so we were just venturing forward from there.

CC: OK.

KF: Um, you were just getting interested in rock and roll. Is that where you started to play then in 8<sup>th</sup> grade?

DA: Uh, I was playing piano and teaching myself a little bit about – relearning the guitar.

KF: OK.

DA: Uh, in high school I wanted to get into the marching band because that was a really big deal in high school. And, uh, Bob Dunstan said if I learned to play tuba I could get into the band right away. And my best friend from those days, Gil Schmidt, uh, was already playing tuba. He had started in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or something- in grade school. So, I took up that instrument and I was within – joined the marching band freshman year, end of my freshman year, uh, and then promptly switched to saxophone. And, I might add, that in Alpena High, uh, Dunstan was a schooled musician and a really wonderful player, uh, and he was so supportive of everybody that wanted to play. He let me take that class over again on a second instrument. I don't know if that would happen, you know, nowadays. Uh, if- if people are that open. But if you wanted to play he would find a way to make it happen. And he was, um, hugely supportive of everybody. I'm just trying to think of all the guys who came through that school who turned out to be pros later. Uh, and I know that, uh, the stuff that we were learning was absolutely at a professional level. It wasn't high school



band. Uh, if you were able to carry the weight, uh, Mr. Dunstan would find a way to- to teach you what you needed to know.

KF: Hmm. So, what kinds of things, um, would you say he was teaching you that was at a professional level?

DA: Arranging. We knew how to arrange. Uh, I mentioned in the questionnaire that I can remember walking down the hall, as like a sophomore, maybe a junior in high school, to do a football rally in the gym. Tom Ferguson was writing out the charts for myself and Harvey Newman. Tom is writing the charts as we walk down the hall. We get to the – we get to the gym which is full of umpty-umpty students and then we sight read- sight read the charts that Tom had just written out for us. And you can't- I've been out in the world and I've played in big bands, you know, literally around the world. An awful lot of the schooled musicians that I know that came through college programs couldn't do stuff that we were doing in high school.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Um, ran into professional musicians who literally, uh, had to very slowly read charts and we were sight reading charts, uh, without, and –and everybody thought it was normal because so many guys could do it.

KF: Mm, hmm. So, it was the sight reading, it was the arranging, transcribing...

DA: All of that stuff, yeah.

KF: Mm, hmm. Right, right. Which, um, and how do you think that, um - how did that, um, serve to your advantage then when you were playing later?

DA: Oh, well, when I got to Nationalist China, uh, they still had big bands there and part of the work that I found there was doing arrangements for big bands. Um, and I did this as a graduate at Alpena High and ACC. Um, I might mention that Willard Fast who was the music teacher at both – he taught Orchestra at Alpena High and I took Orchestra as well. Playing bassoon parts on baritone sax. But he also, uh, taught tonal dictation and arranging at Alpena Community College and going through those classes, um, you come out of there at a professional level. I mean, literally it was at a professional level. Guys who went to Julliard weren't necessarily as well prepared as a lot of kids that came through Alpena High and ACC.

KF: That's amazing.

DA: We were really lucky.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Uh, I tracked those – I took Mr. Fast out to dinner probably ten years ago. Tracked him down. Uh, took a little doing but he was over at – I think he was over at Hart, something like that and I was speaking in the area, uh, and, uh, so I tracked him down and we went out to dinner. And

had a nice conversation. He had no idea who I was, of course, because they turned out dozens and dozens of kids like this. Um, but it was, uh, I remember as like a sophomore in high school, I was walking home, uh, with, um, a friend who delivered papers and I would help him deliver papers on his paper route. We were passing this house and I could hear piano music, uh, coming from the house and it was really good, um, and asked Mark who lived there and it was Mr. Fast. So, I listen- I sat on the porch and listened for a while and it occurred to me that this guy had just put in a full day teaching music, hurried home, so he could practice. And I thought, this is the kind of job I want. I would like to have – you know, to be able to do something that you do all day and get paid for it and then go home and do it for fun and that's what music has always been for us. Uh, when we were playing in clubs six nights a week on the seventh night we'd go play with somebody else. For free.

KF: Mm, hmm. Right.

DA: Not many people get to do that in this life.

KF: No. It's true. Now, what about, um, I'm just going to shift gears for a minute.

DA: Sure.

KF: What about you, Eve? During this time period, um, what were you doing?

EA: Which time period?

KF: Um, we'll talk about the early years again.

EA: The early years.

KF: With you.

EA: The early years.

KF: How did you get started with music?

EA: Sure. In church.

KF: OK, OK.

EA: Born and raised Catholic. At a very small church in Black River and everybody sang and my sister sang, my mother sang, um, and later when approaching seven or eight years old, the local watering hole which still exists, Mountain Inn.

KF: Yes.

EA: The Mountain now. Yes. My sister and I on Sunday afternoons. It seemed to be the gathering place for people to let off steam. We would be there with our parents and we would sing. Just sing and I think about ten years old I got a guitar.

DA: You're leaving out your harmonica. Sorry. You were already playing harmonica.

EA: I was playing harmonica, yes. My mother worked at a fish packing plant in Black River and I used to sit on an ice chute when boats would come in to deliver their fish to be taken care of – I'd sit on the ice chute and play my harmonica and people would drop little coins in my bucket.

KF: How old were you?

EA: I was about six at that time.

KF: You both got started really young!

EA: We did. We did.

KF: And getting paid.

EA: Yes.

KF: Both getting paid at the age of six.

EA: Yes.

DA: Yeah, that's true. Yeah.

EA: The Mountain Inn thing. That was just for fun. And, um, there was a, there's another place that still exists. It's on the corner in Harrisville. It's right by the tracks. I don't recall the name.

DA: It's called the Snake Pit.

EA: It was the Snake Pit then.

KF: I've heard this name before.

EA: Yes.

KF: What a name.

EA: The Snake Pit, yes.

DA: Who thought this was a good idea, yeah?

EA: And we used to on Sunday afternoons would go there. Mom and Dad would have a couple of brews and my sister and I would sing and I got a guitar, I think, I was 10 years old for Christmas from an aunt and uncle and that started me doing that.

KF: Mm-hmm.

EA: And we had in our home, um, a pu- an old pump organ that I played and, uh, played guitar and harmonica and my sister and I would sing and have a good time doing it. And high school was, uh,

a little different because I wanted to be in the high school band but couldn't afford a snare drum so I wound up in vocal music and we had a really interesting teacher. Her name was Wagner, Mrs. Wagner and her daughter at the time was on Broadway – singing on Broadway and had a wonderful operatic-type voice and she was there and Mrs. Wagner – you didn't sit in a seat. You lined the walls and you sang from here (indicating abdomen), not here (indicating throat) so she would listen to - she would walk around the room and listen to everybody sing and at any given time give you a whack in the tummy to see if you were tight and doing it proper-properly.

KF: Singing from your diaphragm rather than from the throat.

EA: (overlapping) Yes. Yes. Yes. And it was good training. It was very good training and other than high school concerts and that kind of thing, um, very little early, had no formal training at all other than the vocal music in high school and I've known Doug since I was very little because their family had a house behind where I lived and, um, I guess it's alright to say because in high school, he and his brother used to go there and have parties on occasion and, uh, our mothers were good friends and she would call. Doug's mother would call my mom and say "one of the boys was up at camp, um, please go up and see if there's a mess before their father gets up there". So my mother would go out so she already knew this guy was just kind of a bummy kid, you know.

KF & EA: (laughing)

EA: And he played in a band and, wow, you know, just kind of a bum. But, that- that was kind of my early-

KF: Right.

EA: The early times.

KF: So, you – but you were going to school, Doug, in- at Alpena-

DA: Alpena, yeah.

KF: And you were going to high school, I take it-

EA: Alcona.

KF: At Alcona, ok.

EA: Yes.

KF: Alright, so –

DA: So we knew each other to say "hi" to but that was about it.

EA: Yes

DA: Yeah.

KF: Right. Because you had – you had a camp out there or was your-?

DA: Oh, it was a home, yeah.

EA: It's a house.

DA: Yeah, it's sort of a camp, sort of a home.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: But my folks had planned to retire there.

KF: OK, OK. So, you had this connection through your mom-

EA: Yes.

KF: -cleaning up after your parties, Doug. (laughter)

DA: Yeah. Well, I'd like to put most of the blame on my brother because I'm pretty sure it was all his fault.

EA: I- I think it was his, yeah.

KF: Well, that's pretty easy to do. (laughter)

DA: Yeah, he's not here. Right.

KF: Yeah, alright. So, um, so you primarily focused on singing in school. Did you, um, sing with any bands during that time?

EA: No.

KF: OK.

EA: No. Not at all. In fact, Doug and I were married and he was in the Air Force studying Chinese in Indiana University and he had a little band with a couple of Air Force guys and, um, two college students, um, who weren't in the Air Force and at Christmas time they had decided they would be better off if they had a girl singer so, one of the college guys, um, had a sister who sang and we had a house. They were in dorms so our house was rehearsal hall and everybody showed up and Sherry sang her song and when she left I said to Doug, "Well, I can sing better than that." Of course, he said, "You're just jealous" And I said, "No, I'm not." So, he said, "OK, sing me a song. What song do you want to sing?"

DA: Now, mind you at this point we had been married six months. I didn't know she could sing.

KF: That's what I was- that's what I was thinking. Is that you hadn't heard her sing before...

DA: Well, our relationship prior to that was all chemistry, actually.

EA: Yeah.

DA: Still is.

KF: (laughter)

EA: So, I said, “OK, I’ll sing. You learn” -on his organ- “you learn how to play Skeeter Davis ‘End of the World’ and I’ll sing it.” So, he did and I sang it and he didn’t say a word. He got on his coat and hat and left. And I thought, well, that’s really good, you know. But he came back with the rest of the band and said, “OK, sing this song” so I sang the song and they decided it would be good if they had two girls in the band which is what we did for the rest of the year and a half we were there. Um, she, it turned out, she liked to sing fast songs and I liked to sing slow songs – ballads – so that, and it worked out very well. And we had a lot of fun work– we worked Indiana University, Purdue University –

DA: We played mostly college gigs, uh, around the area at Purdue at IU and, uh –

EA: A lot of fun.

DA: Yeah. And a few clubs.

CC: And what was the name of your band at that point?

DA: That was Rick and the Rivas. They recorded under that name later after I left.

EA: Yup. They did.

DA: Um, Rick Bush and his sister Sherry. Uh, and, uh, the rest of it was, well, you know what it’s like in college, guys are coming and going and that’s- it wasn’t that bad. Good band though.

EA: And it all came to a s- grinding halt. You remember when? When President Kennedy got shot.

DA: Oh, that’s right!

EA: The whole town shut down.

DA: God, you’re right! Everything.

EA: No entertainment.

KF: Wow.

EA: Nothing. ‘Til the end- after the first of the year.

DA: Hey, we’ve got a milestone, because that was 1963.

KF: Right. Right.

DA: Yeah. And when that happened all of our gigs instantly evaporated –

EA: Yes.

DA: -overnight because they shut down all entertainment in the area, uh, that went on for months. I don't think we played again

EA: Not until then end of – January.

DA: The end of the year, yeah.

EA: Yup.

KF: Wow. So, at that point, had you disbanded as a group because you said it came to a grinding halt.

DA: No, we just starved together.

EA: We just- (laughter)

KF: OK. (laughter) OK. Alright.

EA: And it started again, um-

DA: It started up again after the first –

EA: After the first of the year and shortly thereafter we left Indiana to go to Texas for Doug's further training, uh, he was a linguist in the Air Force – Chinese Linguist. And I think he went to-

DA: Went to tech school.

EA: -Texas, yeah.

DA: To learn, uh, radio.

EA: Radio op. And after that Doug-

DA: Then we played in Texas-

EA: We played in Texas, uh, we didn't – what we didn't know at that time we were the first integrated band to ever play in Texas, uh, black and white did not mix. We – when we worked with these men we-

DA: Yeah, this was '63 –

EA: Yeah.

DA: Jim Crow- er, '64 it would've been-

EA: '64

DA: -early '64 and Jim Crow was still the law of the land and, uh, I gravitated to a club that had a, uh, a black band-

EA: Blues band, blues band.

DA: Blues band called The Counts and I auditioned for them and I got in to the band because as it happened one of the guys was leaving and, uh, I was the only white guy in that band and being from Alpena, like I knew, you know, I had no idea that this was even untoward. I found that out in a hurry. Uh, but we were the only, at that point the only integrated band that had played that town.

EA: Mm,hmm.

DA: Um, and it was a hot band and we did a lot of business- had a great time.

KF: Mm,hmm. Now, were you a singer, too, Doug?

DA: Yeah.

KF: OK, alright. And was your primary instrument guitar always or did you play – keyboard?

DA: No, at that point I was playing keyboards, well, organ – a Hammond B3-

EA: Mm,hmm.

DA: - and uh, uh played saxophone

EA: Sax.

DA: From my years at Alpena High. Um, those were my primary, I played guitar also but I didn't play guitar in that band because they already had a brilliant guitar player in that band.

EA: Played horn in that band.

DA: Yeah.

KF: Now, before the two of you played together-

DA: Yup.

KF: -you did have several bands-

DA: Oh, yeah, sure.

KF: -in high school years.

DA: Sure.



KF: Can you- can you walk me through, uh, some of that history in the – in the high school years – going back a little?

DA: OK. High school years. As a sideman I started out with, uh, a couple of different bands. I played with Dick Niemi. I played with Johnny Woytaszek, um, I met Al Zdan in Johnny Woytaszek's band. Uh, Al was a bass player who had been a good friend all these years. He was our Best Man when we got married. Uh, and, uh, and still in touch and Al's still playing in this town. God, I love this business! Um, and with Al- Al and I put a group together called The Playboys. That was with Elwood Smith who has since become a nationally recognized illustrator. He's a good guitar player, too. Um, that group played – we played together for a couple of years. Uh, at the same time, this being Alpena you kind of played catch as catch can as to, you know, depending on who was playing where you would put a group together that might be together for a night or a month or a couple of months, uh, to work a specific job and, uh, we were playing at Twin Acres – Al and I were playing in that group, uh, with Jerry Rucinski and Jim LaCross. Um, Jim on saxophone, Jerry on drums. And it – it was almost like a floating family. We all knew each other. We'd all grown up together, uh, everybody knew, who's- who was good at what. So if you needed a band for a specific- you had a wedding you had to play, for example, you got a job, you could put a band together literally without rehearsal and you knew each other well enough to know that if I asked Jimmy LaCross to play with me we would be playing two-part harmony on saxes in any key you wanted, any song you wanted to play. That was our strength. Uh, so we were like a miniature horn section and we did a lot of gigs together, uh, that way that would be literally one nighters. We'd show up at 9:25 and the show started at 9:30 folks. And that's the way the business was in those days so a lot of different bands. None of them consistent for any great length of time. I worked with Calvin Barton, uh, and Teddy Haight in a trio. We did mostly country, uh, Calvin was, uh, Calvin played guitar and sang. Uh, wonderful singer. Um, Teddy played drums and we were playing country halls, uh, \$5 a night, \$10 a night, whatever, you know, the traffic would bear, um, and we played, God, I swear, every - I don't know if there's a hall within a hundred miles of this town that I haven't played at some point.

EA: Who were you playing with when you played at the Swing Bowl?

DA: Uh, that was with Johnny RZad and Jimmy LaCross. Did you know Johnny?

CC: That's a new name.

DA: OK, uh, let's back up just a tad. There were, there's an RZad family – that's R-Z-A-D. Uh, I think they were Czech. Uh, but his - Johnny's dad, Andy, was a clarinet player. I met him in polka bands. Uh, I played in a lot of polka bands. I was a hired gun for that. You need a sax player, I'm your guy. I know them all by heart. Um, I once played a Polish wedding in Posen where the whole band was Polish. I don't know where they got these guys. But they didn't speak English, uh, but they had charts. So, I could sight read the charts. Um, but we were playing stuff that was really cool – really European - and it was all like 32<sup>nd</sup> notes, I mean, this was, you know, this was scary. Um, but those are the jobs. You'd show up and you were ready to go and it was a three day wedding. I

had to play with these guys three days in a row – we played Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday afternoon – and by Sunday afternoon it was a really wild scene.

KF: Oh, I bet. (laughter)

DA: Because people had been partying for three days at this point-

KF: Right.

DA: You know. Um, it was so much fun. I cannot emphasize that enough. It was business. It was a job. We were all getting paid. We all brought skills to the table. We had to do this stuff cold. You'd show up and you'd do it cold. No rehearsal. Literally with guys you can't even talk to because they don't speak freakin' English. Um, Teddy Kapala, who was Polish and an accordion player. He helped us through, uh, part of those sets as an interpreter for cryin' out loud just to tell me what I was supposed to be doing. Um, but it was, um, and I played with Teddy in other bands, you know, with other shows. Um, I met Andy Rząd during this period. Clarinet player. Really good. Uh, and his son Johnny who was a guitarist. Um, and we played the Swing Bowl. It was Jim LaCross, Johnny and Al. Donny Gappa on drums.

KF: Now, what is a Swing Bowl?

CC: Donny who?

DA & EA: Donny Gappa.

DA: G-A-P-P-A.

KF: Is that new to you, too, Carole?

CC: That's brand new.

DA: Catholic Central.

EA: Drummer. Good drummer.

DA: Good drummer.

CC: Last name again?

DA: Gappa. His folks had Gappa's Market.

KF: G-A-P-P-A?

DA: Yup.

KF: OK. Gappa's Market. I haven't heard of that either.

DA: Donny wound up working at Neiman's.

EA: Neiman's.

DA: For many years.

EA: Yes. Yes. He was there a long time.

DA: Uh, and nobody knew he was a player because he was very quiet. He was the quietest guy on the planet. And he's a drummer, you know, and we played together in four or five different incarnations. I played country with him. I played polkas with him. And we played rock and roll. Uh, again, different line-ups, uh, to do the various jobs. Donny and I played with, um, a guitarist named Billy Foster. Uh, and, um, rhythm guitarist...wow, Sylvester - Bob Sylvester.

EA: Bob Sylvester.

DA: You know Bob, right? Yeah.

CC: Very well.

DA: Um, a really good rhythm guitarist. And we played at Jack's Bar. It was called. Became Club 32 later. Um, we were at Jack's Bar for – wow – a year. Something like that. Playing country three nights a week. And I was playing sax in that band. Uh, and some guitar.

KF: This was all during high school?

DA: Pardon?

KF: This was all during high school?

DA: Yeah.

KF: That you were doing this?

DA: Yeah. All of it. Yeah.

KF: How were you getting up in the morning? Playing – I mean, how many days a week did you play?

DA: Three or four.

KF: Oh, wow!

DA: And-and actually, in retrospect, I was playing in the clubs. Um, when I got to college I was running cross country and I had a job all through high school as a stock boy at McClellan's, uh, downtown and later at Monkey Ward's, um, ah, you know, when they still had a Montgomery Ward's store here. I was a stock boy then so I didn't get a whole lot of sleep during that era. I'm not sure how I got through school in one piece but I did.

EA: You used to say you ate your way through. A norm- a normal dinner for him would be a cheeseburger with the works, a massive mountain of French fries with gravy, and a hot beef sandwich. That's the whole thing.

CC: But that was probably only once a day he ate.

KF: Right.

CC: The rest of the time he was running.

KF: Right. Because that's all he had time for. (laughter)

DA: Pretty much, yeah, yeah, that was between- dinner at my job.

EA: Yeah.

KF: Mm-hmm. Wow. So, did you go to, um, A.C.C.?

DA: Yeah.

KF: OK.

DA: Yeah.

KF: So, you were here for two years as well?

DA: Two years, yeah.

KF: OK.

DA: Graduated from AHS in 1960. Went on to ACC until '62 at which point I had already enlisted and was waiting to be called up. And just before I left I married my girlfriend.

EA: (laughter)

KF: Were you going to ACC as well?

EA: No.

KF: OK.

DA: She was still in high school. She was only 17.

KF: Oh, OK.

DA: I think I'd be arrested now for that.

KF: (laughter)

DA: Uh, but in those days that was not that uncommon. I mean, in those days-

EA: If you weren't engaged by the time you were a junior or senior you were going to be an old maid. You know.

CC: That's right.

DA: That was true. What do you think about half of our class was engaged senior year?

CC: Absolutely.

DA: You were engaged senior year, I'm guessing, right?

CC: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

DA: Yeah, OK. Were you married yet?

CC: Mm-mm.

EA: What was that about?

DA: OK. We're getting sidetracked.

(laughter)

KF: Yeah, OK. Did you have some-some questions about this-this time period?

CC: You're doing very well.

KF: Thanks.

CC: Very well. I- I had. I would've had questions had I known all this about these guys. I'm fascinated by what you're telling us. You're giving us names we've not heard yet.

DA: Oh, OK.

CC: You know, we're into thirty people that we've interviewed and there's names here that I've never- I have not heard here before.

EA: Oh, my.

DA: Oh, cool.

CC: Yeah, so.

DA: OK. Well, we can go down memory lane that way. Part of this is because, when I started playing, my background was actually swing and jazz. That was what I had grown up listening to. Uh, and that was the first stuff that I played in the clubs. And I started playing in clubs when I was 14. Uh, my first professional job was at the Hideaway, um, which was still called the Hideaway in those days. Uh, with Bob LaMarre, Johnny Woytaszek played drums, Don Davis played trumpet. I

mean, we're talking about basically a swing small combo. Um, played with those guys at 14. Uh, came back later and played the same club with a polka band with Johnny Woytaszek and the Thunder Bay Polka Jacks. First, with Elwood Smith and Norm Seiss. Later, with Teddy Kapala and Norm Zeiss. And Norm's a wonderful accordionist who still plays. Uh, just recently voted in to the Polka Hall of Fame for the state of Michigan. Uh, great guy and, uh, God, we had more fun. I can't believe we survived all that. Uh...

KF: What instrument did you play when you were playing with the polka bands? I was just curious...

DA: I was playing saxophone most of the time and, uh, then keyboards later. Uh, but with polka band mostly saxophone and some guitar.

KF: Mm-hmm. I was thinking about what you were saying about, uh, following those fast, uh, polka charts-

DA: Sure-

KF: -that's-that's where that high school training came in -

DA: Absolutely.

KF: Yeah.

DA: Oh, yeah.

KF: Oh...

DA: We were talking about the Swing Bowl. Arnie Stump showed up about that time. Arnie was from Tawas City. Wonderful guitarist. Played banjo. And the thing that we had in common was we were both hooked on blues from listening to WLAC. Same show all night long because that's all they played on those stations. Um, and this was totally black music. That was the only place you could hear it in those days. Uh, because it didn't get- black music didn't get much airplay on mainstream stations and blues didn't get any airplay at all. And Arnie and I learned all this stuff by heart, by rote, and wound up working together in a lot of different bands, uh, during that era. He also played, you know, with other people but, uh, really strong influence in this area for a long time. Uh, moved out to Arizona, I think, in the '60s. No, '70s.

EA: '70s - '80s, maybe.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Great guy. Great player.

KF: Right. OK. So, you went to ACC and then, um, you enlisted.

DA: Yes.

KF: But I heard a university somewhere in there.

DA: Oh, well, I...

KF: So, where did that come in?

DA: Sure. I joined the Air Force. They assigned me to Intelligence. Um, they give you a battery of tests and I wound up as a Chinese linguist. Um, and to do that, they sent me to Indiana University for a year. About eight months I think it was actually. Uh, for that course in Chinese Language and Eastern Asian Studies. Uh, and from there to Tech School in Texas and I was playing the whole time that I was doing this in college, I mean, I was just a college kid. Uh, we weren't in uniform. We just attended classes like everybody else. Uh, I enlisted because they said the war was going to be over in a hurry and I didn't want to miss my part. Um, because in my family everybody goes. Just – we've talked about that since. It's- just a minor aside- my brother and I- it occurred to us- we never had a discussion about not going. It was just assumed. Everybody went in this town. It wasn't that uncommon. Small town boys.

CC: The draft- the draft was still in, was it not?

DA: The draft was still in but whether you were drafted or not you knew you were going. You know, just staying home wasn't done much. Small town.

KF: So, they were paying for your education –

DA: Sure.

KF: -at that time and you both were married-

EA: Mm-hmm.

DA: Sure.

KF: and that's when you discovered that Eve could sing-

DA: Yup.

EA: Yes.

KF: And started that band. What was the name of that band again? The-

DA: Rick and the Rivas.

KF: Rick and the Rivas. OK. So, that was in the Indiana University time.

DA: Yup, the whole time we were there.

KF: And then when you moved to Texas. That's when you joined the-

DA: Joined The Counts.

EA: The Counts.

KF: Joined The Counts, OK, and-

EA: And –

KF: -and did you join The Counts as well.

EA: Yes. I played rhythm guitar in that band. And, um, directly after that training Doug went to Taiwan which was an unaccompanied tour for eighteen months. And, um, Arnie Stump and I actually rehearsed several times, uh, he had problems not being able to find a bass player so I decided, “I should become a bass player.” And I wrote Doug a letter saying I think I’m going to learn to play bass and got a letter, they kind of crossed, saying I think you should learn to play bass. So...

KF: You had the same idea. (laughter)

DA: Yeah. Well, you know, it’s hard to find good bass players. Ad Zdan was one of the best I know. But if I had to pick another one. There was Al, there was Dick Gamble, there was Tory Osgerby – and those were the only three bass players in this town. That I recall from that era.

CC: Coming up with more names...

KF: I think you mentioned another name that-

DA: Names that you didn’t have yet. OK.

KF: Yeah.

CC: Gamble?

DA: Dick Gamble.

EA: Good bass player.

DA: Dick Gamble was the first guy who played a Fender bass that I ever heard. He had a left handed Fender bass.

CC: Of course, Tory played-

DA: He played upright bass.

CC: Upright bass.

DA: Sure. Tory played with, uh, Bill Foster and myself with Bob Sylvester at Jack’s. Tory was a bass player in that group.



EA: There was another bass player in the wings here because when, uh, when we came back from Taiwan our stuff was delayed, our instrument – you had yours, I didn't have mine and I rented a bass from –

DA: No, that was Tory.

EA: Was that Tory?

DA: Yeah, that was Tory.

EA: OK. Alright.

DA: He was playing bass guitar by then. Yeah.

EA: OK.

KF: So, did you go along to Taiwan then as well?

EA: I did.

KF: OK.

EA: I did. Um, this was an unaccompanied tour. He should've been there for fifteen months by himself.

KF: OK. That's what I thought I heard you say, so...

EA: And I thought about all these lovely Oriental women over there with my gorgeous twenty year old husband and I decided this wasn't going to work. So, I put myself on a plane to Taiwan and showed up unannounced and the Air Force said you can't be here and I said, "Well, I have a one way ticket, so you can send me home. Otherwise, I'm here." And I was there.

KF: Good for you.

EA: And, um, the interesting part was I kept getting called in to the Commander's office because these wives kept showing up when they weren't supposed to be there, so, uh, we had a good little community going...

DA: It was complicated.

EA: It was complicated.

DA: It was. Because it was an unaccompanied tour and she basically showed up and wouldn't go home.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: But, uh, I was – I was stationed at a base outside of Taipei and, uh, we-

EA: Played music.

DA: -got a place in town and very quickly wound up in bands working in the clubs in China.

KF: I just love-

DA: I can sing in Chinese.

KF: I love that you- you're here in Taiwan just for this short amount of time but you can't stop playing. You just have to-

DA: Oh, no!

EA: No!

KF: Yeah. You have to go out and figure out how you're going to keep playing.

EA: No, when we decided I was going to go, I packed up his whole entire B3 and horns and everything and who was the trucking company at that time? Here- .

DA: Uh,

EA: Big, yellow- I can see-

DA: Right downtown.

CC: Mayflower?

EA: That's it.

DA: Yeah, it was Mayflower but it was a family name – Mulvaney's?

EA: Yes, yes, yes. (overlapping)

CC: Yeah, they were both – I believe, both –

DA: I think they became Mayflower later, but, yeah. And they packed it all up for us.

EA: They packed it up and shipped it-

DA: To China-

EA: -sunny, south-east Asia.

CC: And you didn't know it was coming.

DA: Ah, no, by that time I did.

EA: He-he knew it, yeah.

DA: Um.

EA: And it showed up and we unfurled it and unpacked it and went to work.

DA: In China, I joined two other bands where I was the only white guy in the band, uh, and, uh, one was called The Ebony's.

KF: That's an interesting name. (laughter)

DA: It's funny. It's funny. You know, and it was a great group. I had more fun playing with those guys. Uh, what was the other group.

EA: The Counts?

DA: No, no, The Counts was in Texas.

EA: The Counts was Texas.

DA: Uh, yeah, it will come to me in a sec, yeah, um. That was the – The Idols.

EA: The Idols – very good, very good.

DA: Um, and we played mostly – we played military clubs. We played Chinese hotels. Um, I learned to sing in Chinese. Um, not a lot of demand for that once you're back. Um, but, um, yeah, we kept playing the whole time we were there. And I had to work this around – I'm stationed on a mountain base – commuting. If you think I wasn't sleeping in high school, I would go sometimes three days without actually getting to bed at all. You know, because just to get to where I was going was hard and there was a war on. It was complicated.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: So, um, yeah we did that for three years.

EA: But the music never stopped.

DA: The music never stopped. That went on the whole time.

KF: What kind of music? Were you playing over there?

DA: Soul music.

KF: OK.

DA: Soul music and blues.

KF: OK.

DA: A lot of demand for that in the clubs. The Chinese had never heard it before. Uh, the, the groups I was with – the show groups- uh, you would have two or three singers, uh, who would be doing dance moves, etc., etc., and I would be the, uh, the center that the house band would be built around. If you played Chinese hotels they already had their own bands. Mostly Filipinos. Uh, who played extremely well. These guys were all schooled musicians who could read charts. I could write charts. Uh, that was how we set up a show. You might have a rehearsal, you might not. You might have to do it cold. Uh, but they were all very talented and were on the other side of the world playing rock and roll and soul for people that have never heard it before. We did a concert for Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang Kai-shek at the time was the dictator of, uh, I think he was called a president but he was a dictator. It was a police state. And we played a personal show for his wife.

EA: At the Grand Hotel.

DA: At the Grand Hotel. Her hotel. She owned it.

EA: Up on a mountain top.

DA: It was on a mountain top, um – you can't make this stuff up...

KF: (to Eve) Were you in that band, too?

EA: I was.

KF: OK.

DA: Played in that show, yeah.

KF: OK.

DA: Again, it was because most of the musicians I worked with were in the military and it was a floating thing because not everybody could be there. Or you might – if you got duty you couldn't go so you would know somebody else you could call who could go. Um, not dissimilar from growing up in Alpena in a small circle of musicians where everybody knew each other. Everybody got along and, uh, if you needed somebody who did a specific thing, you knew somebody to call or you knew somebody to ask, uh, but it was all very collegial, um-

CC: I guess- I guess my question would be –

DA: Sure!

CC: - to Eve. Were you accepted in, within that time frame, by those other musicians?

EA: Oh, absolutely.

CC: You were accepted.

EA: Yes, yes. Yup.

CC: Because women weren't necessarily accepted well.

EA: No, it was actually turned out to be a novelty kind of.

CC: OK.

EA: Um, there were floor shows that came over – overseas, um, who would be all-girl floor shows or all guys or the Everly Brothers or Joe Mathis and his wife but vocal groups there were no women singers but I had no trouble with that.

DA: That's one of the high points of my life. That I once stood at a urinal next to Joe Mathis.

(Laughter)

DA: I mean, how many people can say that?

EA: Your brush with greatness.

(laughter)

DA: No, we didn't actually brush because, you know-

KF: Yeah.

DA: At those moments, guys tend to avoid each other's eyes, but even so, it was Joe Mathis. I knew who he was.

KF: (laughter) That's great.

CC: Interesting.

DA: But unless you're a guitar player you probably have no idea who Joe Mathis was.

KF: I have no idea, but I know it must be somebody important.

EA: Carole knows.

DA: He was a great guitar player. He played with Ricky Nelson on the early records-

KF: OK.

DA: - and he was a big country guitar player. Played a double-neck. He was the first guy that anybody knew that actually played one of those.

CC: But he finger-picked, did he not?

DA: Yeah, oh, he was a great player.

EA: He did. Yes.

CC: Yeah.

KF: Great.

EA: Other than Al Zdan who played a double-neck.

DA: Al, that's right. Al played a double-neck. He had a guitar and a bass. Um, OK, next question.

KF: OK. So, so you were in Taiwan.

EA: Mm-hmm.

KF: And then when you left – when you came back, what happened next. Where did you go?

EA: Well, we didn't wind up there for fifteen months. We actually wound up there - we were there two and half years almost three years because the war was going on. They were short of people that did Doug's job and we really, really liked it there. So, he kept extending.

KF: Oh...

EA: And we stayed there for a great long while and, um...

DA: Without going into detail about my job. It was in intelligence and I was a history buff. I still am. And it was like being in the middle of a history book. We're right in the middle of a war and it's all right there. So, no, I didn't want to leave. I was having a- between the clubs at night and working twelve hour days. I literally would not go to bed sometimes for two or three days at a time. Um, but the work was fascinating and I really thought hard about staying on as a civilian.

EA: Well, actually, we tried – we tried to stay there but by the time we decided we should stay there, there wasn't enough time to get paperwork done- red tape.

DA: Well, and my dad had a heart attack. It was time to come home.

EA: Doug's father had a heart attack. We decided to come home.

DA: But it was a near thing. We had a really good time there. And, musically, Taipei's a huge city, you know, at that time several million people. And very international. You know, it was, uh-

EA: And each branch of the military had a huge, huge nightclub complete with gambling. Great clubs.

DA: Yeah.

EA: Linco Club was Air Force. There was a Navy Club. Army, huge Army Club. Thirteen, Club Thirteen. We worked all of those.

DA: All of those. Plus, the Chinese hotels. There was a lot of action there.

EA: Mm-hmm.

KF: Did you find, um, so you found that there wasn't much of a difference musically between playing in the states and playing there because they were bringing a lot of the same music.

DA: American music dominates the world. We really do.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Uh, at the time, um, The Beatles were big internationally. They had the Chinese Beatles,

EA: Oh, yes.

DA: We met those guys in passing. Um, we played the same clubs. But American music – you could always find work. We were in demand pretty much, all the groups that I worked with, um, and again, these are groups that I was the only white guy in. You know, but, uh, there was always plenty of work.

KF: Did you find that worked to your advantage that you could bring some of that American sensibility.

DA: Oh, absolutely, yeah, yeah.

KF: Yeah, yeah.

DA: It's, um, oddly enough I did study Chinese music. I can sing in Chinese. We did a couple songs in any given show where we would sing it in Chinese because we were in freakin' China.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Uh, and you at some point have to connect with an audience that might be in mostly Chinese. Um, this is surreal but, I mean, this was the life we had. Uh, but the fact that we were Americans playing American music, yeah, that was in huge demand. It was all fresh to those folks.

KF: Mm-hmm. That's great. So, when you did end up coming back here, um, where did you land?

DA: Alpena. And I immediately hooked up with guys I had played with in high school.

EA: No, you immediately enrolled in college.

DA: Well, yeah, I came back to go back to school. Uh, I'd enrolled at U of M. Um, but I got here in May and I was enrolled for the fall term at U of M and, uh, ran into Jim Hardy and his brother Dave, uh, and Alan Sabourin whom I'd known from, you know, before high school. Al was a drummer and sax player and we put together a band just to play the summer. That's all we were going to do. Uh, we had a gig at Jack's Bar and we were just gonna play the summer away. Um, and we were having so much fun and we kept getting more work and you could actually make a living in those days which was a revelation to me. Before it had always been kind of catch as catch can but

now it was six nights a week if you wanted to work that much. Uh, and we put that group together and we got an offer to go to Houghton Lake to play the summer in a club over there. Uh, and we did that had a great time and fall came and went and we just kept on playing.

CC: Can you remember the name of the band?

DA: With Dave and Jim? Wow. I think it was called D.A. and the Witnesses, wasn't it?

CC: OK.

EA: It was. It was. Yeah.

KF: I remember reading that.

EA: Yup.

DA: And Dave-

KF: Um, what kind of music were you playing?

DA: Rock and roll.

KF: Rock and roll.

DA: Yeah, pop music of the day.

KF: Mm-hmm. Now, did you play – did you ever get into writing any of your own music?

DA: Oh, sure. Sure.

KF: Oh, OK. Alright. With that group were you playing...?

DA: Actually, we didn't do much original material in that group.

EA: Not that one.

DA: Uh, that came. Well, no, that came later.

KF: OK.

DA: But we were still called D.A. and the Witnesses but the Hardy brothers both left. Uh, Al stayed on. We played as a trio, uh, with Al Sabourin, um...

EA: At Twin Acres for a while.

DA: Twin Acres. We were there two years. Something like that. Six nights a week.

KF: And Eve, you were in this band, too?

EA: Mm, hmm. Yes.



DA: Yeah, she joined. She was- she was the draw in that band.

KF: OK.

DA: Um, she was our front singer. Girl singers in those days, not so many of them. You know. Who could actually do this. Um, the level of talent, to go on stage cold turkey and play with people you don't know. This does not fall off trees. You know, this is a fairly limited circle-

EA: But the thing is –

DA: -but in this town there was always a lot of players, a lot of good people here.

EA: It always seemed so natural because we knew so many people who could do it. And I know Carole would, too, you because it, and it-

DA: You kind of accept it as normal because everybody you know-

CC: I'm still doing that.

DA: Yeah, sure, I mean -

EA: But when you get out in the big world and meet people who want to do it but can't, I mean, and it's, it's – I have a lady who I work with who desperately wanted to learn to play guitar. Her husband bought her a guitar for Christmas. And she's been having lessons, taking lessons for two years and she said to me, "How do you know when it's time to change chords?" And I couldn't even explain that. Um, so, and after-

DA: How do you not know?

EA: How do you not know?

DA: But, yeah-

EA: But, so it's not a-

DA: -because everyone you know can do this. I grew up in a family who could all do it.

EA: And everybody you knew could do it.

DA: And I accepted it. Everyone I knew could do it. So you accept this as normal until you get out in the world and realize actually it's a fairly tight circle of people that can actually do this thing.

EA: We worked with a very good guitarist in Taiwan who, um, Davey Dodds-

DA: Oh, yeah.

EA: He-he couldn't retain anything. We hired him. He came. Doug worked days. He and I, this gentleman, he played guitar and I would rehearse songs. The next day it was all totally gone.

CC: Wow.

EA: And it just, we tried, we really tried but it-

DA: He was a brilliant player.

EA: He was.

DA: He couldn't retain arrangements. Never run into that particular problem before. But, yeah, it's, uh, getting sidetracked.

KF: That's OK. Sometimes the meanderings have great gold within them. (laughter)

CC: I might like to add here to about, uh, Doug and Eve, uh, I didn't get to see them a lot but when I did, and I suspect that was the draw with Eve.

DA: Oh, absolutely.

CC: She always looked the part. She always – her makeup, her hair, her clothing.

EA: Oh, yeah. It was all flash.

CC: Doug, also. But it -she was, she was-

DA: My makeup was always impeccable. I think it –

CC: Yeah, and she was, she was quintessential musician and she did – looked the part. Unlike some of the ladies today. This one was, uh, definitely. The guys liked to look at her, that's for sure.

(Laughter)

EA: Thank you.

CC: And I'm sure Doug knew that.

DA: I can tell you a story. Here's a story. My granddaughter, uh, came into my office, uh, a couple years ago, and I have a picture of Eve that was taken at Twin Acres on my desk. And there was this long pause and she said, "Who's that lady?" And I said, "You know who that lady is." And she said, "Well, is she a friend?"

KF: (laughter) That's great!

DA: Little troublemaker. And I said, "No, that's your grandmother." And then she got it but, um, dressed for stage. Yeah...

EA: Short skirt, tall boots.

DA: Yeah.

EA: Long, blonde hair. Face, you know.

DA: This was like '68, or something like that.

EA: I was 24 years old.

DA: Yeah.

KF: Right.

DA: But, um, yeah, so, yeah.

CC: She was in command of what she did.

DA: Oh, absolutely.

CC: Her dress. Her guitar playing. Her singing.

EA: You know, we were talking about that on the way here. Doug did a speaking thing for his writing part, um, at Saginaw Club in Saginaw and some guy asked him how he came out of the music business unscathed- no drugs, no booze, problems, he and we did that. And he had no good answer because we couldn't explain that because for everybody else or most people we knew it was a big party time and it was the way we made our living and the only way we made our living and we treated it as a really serious business and took care of business. You know, and –

DA: But the nature of the business is there's booze all night long for free –

EA: And somebody's always willing to buy it for you, you know.

DA: And how many guys? How many guys do we know that have gotten beaten up by that life.

CC: Many. Many.

DA: It's a hard life, yeah. I buried 'em. You know, it's not much fun.

EA: It's not.

DA: And I never really faced that question about how did you dodge that bullet and I don't have a good answer. You know, um –

EA: But what you said reminded me of that, you said, in control and that's, I think, I think that's why we never did the booze thing or anything else because I always feel – I have the need to be in control. I need to know that what I'm doing is the right thing. You know. And I think you're to a certain extent that way, too.

DA: I just don't hold my liquor very well.

(laughter)

DA: I'm a happy drunk.

(laughter)

KF: Well, I think to have the confidence to fly one way to Taiwan indicates something about your character.

DA: I don't know if confidence is the right description of that.

KF: Well, but I'm, you know, you did it and, and you were putting yourself out there in these bands-

EA: Oh, yes.

KF: At a time when there weren't as many-

EA: Yes.

KF: - women in, uh, performing. So, I-I think that speaks to-to something – to a strength – confidence.

EA: When Doug and I were dating I remember my elder sister saying, "Wouldn't it be cool if you married him and joined his band?"

KF: Mm, hmm.

EA: I said, "Yeah, it would."

DA: A minor footnote. We were in this- we did this for a living for about 35 years and, uh, in all that time met literally hundreds of other musicians and we only know one other couple, uh, that would be from California, uh, that stayed married. I mean, the business is really hard on relationships. You're gone all the time. You're meeting new people all the time. If you have a fight with your wife you can get lucky that night, you know. And it's so, it's really hard, uh, to keep that together. We never had a problem.

EA: Uh-uh.

DA: Another bullet we dodged. But of all the couples that we've known. We've known literally hundreds of them and worked with, you know, lots and lots of guys. The only ones whose relationship survived was us and Melody and Bones.

EA: Mm, hmm.

DA: That was it.

CC: Al and Kay Zdan.

EA: Al and Kay Zdan. Yes.

DA: Yes, you're right. But Kay's not in the business.

CC: No, but she's with him.

DA: Oh, and she is and, uh, she – I've known Kay since I was a kid. You know, she's great and, um, super supportive. Uh, Al wouldn't still be in the business if she wasn't as supportive as she always has been. Um, but, no, I'm talking about couples who were both involved –

CC: Ok.

DA: -in the business, you know, either singers, actors, whatever. To survive that life and stay together. That's a colorful thing to do. Uh, because it doesn't happen very often.

KF: Oh, I think that's really difficult, um, to be able to work together artistically, uh, I think in a lot of the art forms that can be a challenge and so when I saw that the two of you performed for as long as you have and you've been married how long?

EA: 53 years.

KF: 53 years.

DA: Yeah, right out of high school.

KF: Yeah, I mean, what do you think- what worked for you that you were able to work together artistically and –

DA: You know, when we were playing in clubs, we were together 24/7.

EA: 24/7, absolutely.

DA: And working for a huge part of that. Six nights a week. As to what's at play there other than a fifty year love affair.

EA: That –for openers.

DA: Which is what it is.

EA: And a love of the music.

DA: And a love of the music. We always- the thing is we've always had a great time. This is really a fun way to make a living. You've gotta be kidding. We're doing – we would play six nights a week in clubs in Flint, in Saginaw, whatever, and on the seventh night we would go find a blues band that was playing someplace else and go over and play for free.

EA: Just for fun.

DA: With guys that we knew in that business. And other players that we knew would come sit in with us, it was, you know, there's a collegiality in this business that is not normal for other

businesses. In other businesses, you're competitors, and we were all competitors with each other, but there is – it's one thing to be, uh, it's like the clubs were competition for each other but the bands weren't necessarily. Uh, because we were all friends.

KF: And that was true even down in the Flint/Saginaw area?

DA: Absolutely.

EA: Yeah.

DA: Yeah. Sure.

EA: Yes. Everybody knew the good players. Players love players.

KF: Yeah.

EA: They do.

KF: So, you – I'm going to go back a little bit –

DA: Sure.

KF: To D.A. and the Witnesses, when you started that summer –

DA: Yes.

KF: And when you came back here. And you just decided I'm not going to go to U of M.

DA: Yeah.

KF: And I'm gonna keep playing. So, what happened from there? You – how did you end up downstate?

DA: Well, we started at Twin Acres.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: We started there as what we thought would be a job for a month or something and we wound up staying there almost two years, I think. Um, playing five- six nights a week.

EA: Ah, yes.

DA: And having a really good time.

KF: What-what year was-did?

DA: This would've been 1968.

EA: '67. We got home in '67.

DA: We came home in '67 and we started the Acres in, I think, about 1968.

EA: '68 and '69.

DA: And we were there in '68, '69. Uh, a club owner from Saginaw came through and saw us there just about the time, uh, you know, it was time to move. Uh, and, uh, got a good offer to go downstate and we took that up.

EA: Also, during that time, here's another name, uh –

DA: Bobby Riggs, for one.

EA: Sam Stephenson.

DA: Oh, Sam Stephenson.

EA: Got out of the army and joined our little band.

KF: Carole, do you know Sam Stephenson?

EA: Oh.

CC: I sure do.

KF: OK. Alright. What did he play?

DA: Guitar.

EA: Guitar player. Absolute dynamite singer.

DA: Just a great singer. Good frie- And we'd known each other in high school. And Sam had been in Vietnam and came home and was looking for a job so he hooked up with us and we played together...

EA: A whole summer.

DA: A whole summer.

EA: And then he went out to Colorado.

DA: And his brother John, also a musician, uh, drummer. And both of them are terrific singers. Both of them. I should have pipes like that. It's not fair.

EA: Hmm.

CC: Still can.

DA: Oh, John, I haven't seen John in years.

CC: He was at Maplewood last year.

DA: Oh, is that right?

CC: He'll be there again this year.

DA: Oh, well, great. That's great.

EA: Wow.

CC: Nashville.

EA: Wow.

DA: He's living in Nashville now?

CC: Nashville.

KF: Is he playing still?

CC: Yes.

KF: Down- down there?

CC: Mm, hmm. He got up and played both bass and drums and sang well.

DA: Oh, good, good. That's great.

EA: Wow.

DA: Johnny could always, I mean, Johnny and Sam both were wonderful vocalists. Sam was a great singer.

CC: Sam passed away from...

DA: No, he got killed. He was killed in a construction accident.

EA: Killed in a construction accident in Aspen, Colorado.

CC: OK, I knew there was something.

EA: Early '70s.

DA: When we moved south to Saginaw, Sam moved to Colorado.

EA: Yup.

DA: He wanted to go to Vail. And so we parted ways happily, uh, wonderful player and I still miss him today.



KF: Did anybody else from that band in Alpena go with you or was it just the two of you going down to Saginaw?

DA: Umm, Mike Garahy

EA: Mike Garahy

DA: Is a new name.

EA: A new name. He was an Air Force kid.

DA: Uh, Al was with us about, Al Sabourin was with us about two years, uh, and he got married and left and was replaced with, uh, Mike Garahy.

EA: Mike Garahy.

DA: Who was a local guy in the Air Force and he was getting out of the Air Force at that time and Mike wound up going down to Saginaw with us. It was probably six months. Not all that long. Good drummer. Nice guy.

KF: Can I get the spelling on his last name?

DA: G-a-r-a-h-y.

KF: G-a-r-a-h-y.

DA: He was a New Yorker.

KF: OK. But he was here- living here.

DA: He was here –

EA: He was here- living here.

DA: Stationed at Phelps Collins when I met him.

KF: OK. OK. So, he-he went with you...

EA & DA: To Saginaw.

KF: OK.

DA: And we had a house band gig there at a place called The Keg. And we were there the better part-

EA: Two and a half years.

DA: -of two and a half years. Uh, six nights a week. Saginaw at that time had thirty-two clubs with live music. Uh –

EA: Seven nights a week.

DA: This was the heyday. Rock and roll was exploding. Uh, everything was experimental. We were doing a lot of original material in that club.

EA: At that time we were.

DA: Because in those days if you could put a butt in the seat, uh, that was all that was required. Just fill the place up and they didn't care what you played. Uh, and there was a lot of experimental music going on not just with us, uh, Bobby Riggs had come, you know, Bobby played with us at the Acres, uh, for a while, and we had played together in other groups, you know, at weddings.

EA: And we passed all these guys like ships in the night.

DA: Yeah.

EA: In various cities, coming and going.

DA: Yeah, Bobby came down and they were playing at Daniel's Den. We were playing across town at The Keg, uh, but at that point, Saginaw had thirty-two clubs, Flint had even more. Uh, there was all the work that you could do and the only thing they cared about was whether the house was full. And among the players, guys traded jobs back and forth. Guys would fill in for each other. If somebody got sick you could borrow somebody out of another band. Nobody thought anything of it. They always came through. Um, club owners sometimes complained. I remember once a bass player filled in for Eve when she was feeling, uh, ill and, uh, a group called The John Brown Trio who were the house band at the Fordney Hotel in Saginaw and the bass player came over and played for us for free. Just to help out, you know. And he got a blast of static from his boss, uh, about, "You're helping our competition?" He said, "You start paying me on my nights off then you can tell me what to play on my nights off."

KF: Right.

DA: God, players. I love players. Players love players. Uh, but that's the way the attitude was. If somebody was jammed up, uh, there are a million more stories I could tell about those days. Um, because the other thing that was happening was drugs were becoming really open and overt in the clubs and in that lifestyle. Um, this was the "don't trust anybody over 30 era", "them against us", uh, hippies were in flower. We all had long hair and wore clothes you can't freakin' believe now.

(laughter)

DA: You know. What was all that about? Plaid pants? Um...

EA: Lapels.

DA: Lapels out to here. Yeah. You look at the way guys dressed in those days. Well, you showed me that book. And a lot of guys in Alpena were dressed in the same way. That was the thing.

Nehru coats. Who thought that was a good idea? In any case, uh, that whole – that era, uh, rock and roll was in a very experimental phase and it was all new. It was all fresh. It was in the clubs. As much as it was on the national scene. Um, we were experimenting with new material all the time. We did a lot of original material. We knew groups that were playing only original material. Uh, that's a tough sell. You know, if you're going to do it live. That's a tough sell. But that was very much the way things were done.

EA: And even though we were transplanted down south in the state we never-never lost our connection-

DA: No, we've always had land. Yeah, we've had property here and had friends here. Yeah.

EA: - with anything up here. And, and, and were always up on where the musicians mostly through Al. Um, kept in close contact with all those people and just - would see them in passing when we returned.

KF: Now, were you able to completely support yourself with your music?

DA: Oh, yeah. Sure. (overlapping)

EA: Yes. This was all we did. (overlapping)

KF: That's amazing to me. And to not have to tour all over the United States. To be able to stay –

EA: Slept in our own bed every night.

KF: Yeah.

DA: That was a choice we made. And part of that was from – going back to the Alvin Ashe Revue when I was six and I was on the bus almost every weekend with nobody to talk to and sitting back there and bored out of my skull. Uh, and from talking to my grandmother who spent years on the road singing gospel. Um, I under- at a very young age- understood the price that you pay if you're going to stay out on the road. You're going to be living on a bus. I didn't want to do that. And when we first got out of the service the plan was that we would do this 'til we couldn't do it anymore or 'til we got bored and then I'd go back to school and get on with my life. Uh, which is how it worked out but it worked out 35 years later instead of what I always thought would be next year. You know, I thought we could get away with this for maybe one more year. Uh, and I thought that up until 2005 when we finally quit.

EA: Part of the really fun stuff about this, um, we played several of Doug's class reunions.

DA: Yeah.

EA: And that was a hoot.

DA: That was a hoot.

EA: That was really – that was a great- a lot of fun.

KF: You know, I'm going to go way back for a second because-

DA: Sure!

KF: - there was a question I had and I didn't get it out there. What was the Swing Bowl? I heard you mention that a couple times and I don't know what that is.

EA: Ahh!

DA: OK. In a nutshell, the Swing Bowl was a – it wasn't a night club.

EA: At Chippewa Point.

CC: A dance hall for teenagers.

DA: That's it. Perfect. That's what it was.

EA: For teenagers. Chippewa Point. It still exists. It's a squatty gray white building behind if you're on 23, look to the right, and you will see it.

CC: 23 South.

EA: 23 South.

KF: Mm-hmm. OK.

EA: The Swing Bowl and that's exact-that's a good description.

DA: Strictly for teens although you would have guys old enough to be in there. Um, and it was a discotheque. Yes. An early-

EA: Yes. Dance hall. Yes.

CC: Dance hall.

EA: Spinning records.

DA: It had a sound system to die for. It was just killer.

EA: And it was loud.

DA: It was deafening and all local bands played there for fun. Um, because that's where the girls were. You know, and, uh, it was- how long would you say that was running? Five years? Something like that? It was a while.

CC: It was a while. It was a while. That's for sure. I don't know exactly how long but it was there and it was very, very-

DA: Oh, it jumped.

EA: It was hot.

CC: It jumped. It was hot.

DA: Every weekend.

CC: I was there once.

DA: Oh, really?

CC: Mm, hmm.

DA: I was there every freakin' weekend that I wasn't playing someplace else. Uh, 'cause that was – that was the place. The music was all hot. Um, friends were playing there often as not, you know, and it was a really fun place. Um, hard to explain how that popped up or why it lasted as long as it did, um, but, yeah, that was –

CC: And the year was, Doug? Approximately?

DA: Uh, let's see, I'm guessing early '60s through to late '60s? I know it was done by the time I came home from the service.

EA: No, no, no, no, no. Earlier than that.

DA: Was it earlier?

EA: Oh, yeah, I was still in high school when it was going. Because-

DA: OK.

EA: -you played out there.

DA: I did play out there. Sure.

EA: And I went there.

DA: Were we dating then?

EA: No.

DA: Oh, OK.

KF: So, I – and that is another question I have to ask – how did you end up meeting? I mean, I know you met when you were young but meeting and dating, I guess?

EA: Doug played –

DA: Arnie Stump. It's Arnie Stump's fault.

EA: Arnie Stump. Yeah, it's all Arnie Stump's fault.

DA: OK. Arnie and I played a gig together at Eve's high school. We played- I think it was the homecoming dance or something.

EA: Uh, huh. Yes.

DA: Arnie meets a girl there. Uh, he insists that he wants to take this girl out. I said, "I know somebody who goes to that school." So, I called Eve asked her if she could set up Arnie with this girl. And, um, the girl said she would go but only if it was a double-date.

EA: Mm, hmm.

DA: At which point we said, "OK. We'll go then. We'll be the other half of the double date." Uh, and we had known each other in passing but it's not a big romantic thing we just knew each other in passing, you know. Uh, so the date was like a disaster from hell.

EA: Well, she didn't – she didn't go.

DA: Because the girl we booked didn't go. We wind up going – Arnie takes my ex-girlfriend out. So, she is in the back seat – my ex.

EA: Another Eve.

DA: Anoth- who's also named Eve. And Arnie gets hammered because he's disappointed that he's not with the girl he wanted to be – it was just – it's like the worst date on the planet. It was awful.

EA: In this '53 Ford that didn't have door latches and had a big hook and eye to keep you from falling out and –

DA: Well, nobody fell out.

EA: And then we ran out of gas.

DA: Yeah, well.

KF: (laughter) That's great!

EA: Honest to God.

DA: It was awful. It was the worst date. The worst first date anybody ever had.

KF: Whose car was it?

EA: Doug's.

DA: My car.

KF: And so you're the one who ran out of gas.

EA: The gas gauge didn't work.

DA: Yeah, the gas gauge didn't work. Nothing worked on that car except the gear shift.

KF: OK.

DA: Anyway, so terrible date and it was so bad that I asked for a make-up date. And the make-up date didn't start out all that well because we went to a frat party.

EA: Mm, hmm.

DA: Uh, and I remember ditching you to go talk to my drunken buddies but I walked back into the room and I saw her standing in the corner talking to somebody and –

EA: I know who that somebody was.

DA: Mike Froggett.

EA: That's right.

DA: So do I. I can still see – I can still see you standing there. Anyway, yeah, and that was instant whatever happens happened, you know. People talk about that and it's not love at first sight but it's something like that. Uh, and here we are.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: And that has never stopped. Whatever that was, here we are, you know. So that's how we hooked up.

KF: Yeah. And sustained you through all those years playing –

EA: Yes.

KF: -together and, yeah.

DA: Well, it's an ongoing thing.

KF: Mm, hmm. Mm, hmm. So, you played for, you said, thirty-some years-

EA & DA: Yes.

KF: And then, um, what year did you stop and –

DA: '05.

KF: '05.

DA: Yeah.

KF: And h- what made you decide to stop at that point?

DA: We always knew that there would be a time that you've got to step away from this.

EA: Yup.

DA: Uh, the drummer that we'd been working with for more than – for nearly 30 –

EA: 32 -32 years.

DA: 32 years, yeah.

EA: 32 years.

DA: His name was Rick Baldwin. From Midland. And wonderful drummer. Wonderful singer. Good friend, uh, in our years on the road he had developed some back trouble and it wasn't getting better. And he had surgery, uh, this was in '05. Had it scheduled, uh, and, um, and the surgery did not go all that well. We thought we were going to be laid off for like 90 days while he healed up. Uh, it turned out rehab was going to take him six months/eight months. Um, and he had been in pain for a long time. Um, and at the end of during the time of- of his recovery it was pretty obvious that, um, he was not going to be able to come back and we were in a – we were driving along some place and had to make a decision about whether we wanted to start over again with somebody else. The business at that time was shrinking. We were ageing out of it. And time to pull the plug. And we just decided that that would be the case. I talked to Ricky about it. And he was good with it. Because he knew that he was still having a lot of trouble. He had not been able to be at 100% for a long time. Um, so, yeah, we just pulled the plug and that was it. Walked away.

EA: And it was a really great ending because it was New Year's Eve, literally, was our last –

DA: We finished up on New Year's Eve. It was a great night. We had a great crowd.

EA: Great. Great crowd. Great party.

DA: Had no idea that it was our last night. Think of how horrible that would've been if we had known that it was ending. But we didn't know. You know? So, we just had a really good time. Uh, had some family there.

EA: Yeah, we talked about that. Who - would you want to sing the last song? Who would sing the last song?

DA: Who's gonna sing the last song?



EA: Do you say you're never gonna see us again? I mean, if you knew it was actually going to happen.

KF: Mm, hmm. Right. You were able to just enjoy yourselves.

EA: Yes.

DA: Oh, we had a great time. It was a great night, yeah.

KF: And not have all this weight –

EA: Yes, yeah.

DA: Yeah.

KF: - on the night.

DA: Yeah, it was just a good night. We had an especially good crowd.

EA: It was a super transition.

DA: Yeah, and so it was perfect. When we stepped away from it. Uh, we both had other things going on. My writing career was going well. Um, I couldn't say, I wouldn't say I was refocusing on that because I was already doing it full time.

KF: Right.

DA: And, um, continues on, just fine, thank you very much. But, yeah, it's stepping away from it was the perfect way to step away from it. The way I compare it is in an airport when you're on the moving sidewalk and you just step off. That's what it felt like.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Just keep right on going.

KF: Mm, hmm. Now, you mentioned you're a writer.

DA: Yeah.

KF: And, um, I'm assuming with most writers you've been writing for many, many years. Probably, or...?

DA: Not so many.

KF: No?

DA: I started in, uh, 1984.

KF: Mmm?

DA: Um, that I studied creative writing here at ACC with, uh, Dr. Myron David Orr and I really had a good time in that class. Uh, Doc Orr was a great character. He's family friend –friend of my dad's. And, um, I really admired his career. His career was that he was a 30-year Marine, uh, then retired and came to Alpena to teach and to write. He was published. He'd published about half a dozen of historical novels. And I thought, I had thought about that at the time as being like, "That's the arc. That's the arc that I would like." I would be a soldier and, uh, do that for 25 years. Sunny south-east Asia changed my mind about that. But I did the first four and that was sufficient and wound up in rock and roll instead but in the back of my mind was always this thing that I wanted to write at the end of that time. Um, except that time wasn't ending. The music kept on going which I had never expected. Uh, and in '84 I just decided that it was time to do this. Either you're going to do it or you're not. Um.

EA: At that time the cities were awash in money. The car plants in Saginaw and Bay City, Midland, Flint were going 24/7 and people had recreational money to just blow and they did.

DA: Yeah.

EA: It was-

DA: So, there was always money for music and it turned out to be – that turned out to be a career. Hadn't really expected that. Uh, and writing I turned out to be moderately good at. So, there wasn't a big long apprenticeship. I started selling – I took a class at U of M in creative writing. I was selling stories out of that class that I wrote for the class. Um, that's not a normal story, I guess.

KF: No, it is not.

DA: So far, nine novels and 120 some short stories.

EA: And in the times you've been writing, um, it's come to our attention that we-we- we had a number at one time but I can't recall. Authors. A number of authors are also musicians for whatever reason. I mean...

DA: Yeah, whatever that talent is it's- it's connected. It really is because so many guys I run into are-are, uh...

EA: Players.

DA: Players. It's just really common.

KF: I wan- yeah, when I looked at that I was curious about that transition.

DA: Yeah.

KF: Uh, between the music career and going into the writing career.

DA: Sure.

KF: And how you see them feeding one another. Um, you know, what accounts for that, do you think? That there are so many musicians that are writers or what-what similarities- ?

DA: I think it might be the same talent.

KF: OK.

DA: I mean, I'm serious. I think it might be the same one – you just use a different aspect of it.

EA: Well, when you're writing a song you're writing a three-minute story. Rather than 300 page story.

DA: I think that one of the reasons that I've been pretty successful as a short story writer, uh, which is not a common thing but it is for me. And I think the training, writing songs, is a great training for that, uh, because in a song you've got three minutes to tell the whole thing. Uh, and you learn how to write very tight. Uh, every word's got to matt- every word matters, you know, there are no spare words in a song. Uh, so that was good training for me. And the rest of it is luck and talent. Here we go. It's the same reason I got into music. But the transition was seamless because I started writing while I was still playing full-time and except for not sleeping which I don't need a lot of it turns out. Uh, I didn't have- I didn't really have to do anything. I just started getting up at 7 in the morning instead of 10.

KF: Mm, hmm. Yes, so, it just, it was interesting when I was taking a look at that and I thought, "Well, what is that?" You know, what is the connection between the two but I guess if you're an artist you're an artist. And also the- the –

DA: Yeah.

KF: - writing, um, too, whenever I've spoken to a writer there's a lot of discipline with having to – you need to write. You need to keep the writing. You need to keep going.

EA: Exactly. Yeah.

KF: And what I hear in your career, is the- from both of you- is a lot of discipline, uh, to the music. And I don't think that's always true for every artist.

DA: No, it's not.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: But, yeah, you can't downplay that. Uh, to write I had to get up at 7 in the morning and work. And I have had no trouble doing that. I was a soldier before I was any of these things. And, uh, that is actually pretty good training for this. You get used to the idea that your time isn't necessarily your own. And if you have to be at a specific place at a specific time you're supposed to be there and you're there. Uh, there's no other way to do this. You have to put in the time and there's literally no other way to do it.

EA: And you have to do – the music business is the same.

DA: The same way.

EA: You've got to put in the time. You've got to rehearse. You've got to learn new material.

DA: To avoid being on the road in tour buses, that means, you've got to be a house band. If you're a house band you have to change the material all the time.

EA: All the time. (overlapping)

DA: We rehearsed once a week, twice a week. For thirty years. Uh, and we would learn three songs at every rehearsal. So, that if you heard us in 90 days, our entire set, our entire show is going to be all different material than when you heard it the last time. Um, and that discipline is what carried us through. Yeah.

EA: And that- And Carole would know this also that's your talents at work because you need to be a quick study to be able to do that. To turn the material over like that. And, we've (laughter) -we've had incidents where a song was requested we didn't do it yet. But we would go to the jukebox and our drummer and Doug and I would write down every other line.

DA: We'd each pick a line because you can't write fast enough to get the song otherwise.

EA: (overlapping) And- we'd pick a line. So, every other line we would do and then listen to it a couple of times and go back and play it.

DA: Mm, hmm.

EA: And we were able to do that and I sometimes wonder what in the world we thought we were doing.

KF: Right there on the spot.

EA: On the spot.

DA: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

EA: Yes.

DA: Cold. If somebody wanted a song we would literally go learn it off the jukebox on a break and go play it.

EA: Decide who was going to sing lead and who was going to what –what – this is my part, this is your part and we'd go do it.

KF: That must have been exciting, too, you know, just that little bit of –

CC: I think- I think that's amazing to be able to do that. We now have computers-

DA: Sure.

CC: - that we can go find this stuff.

DA: Yeah, now we can find all this stuff. In those days you couldn't.

CC: Back then we were-

DA: Yeah.

CC: - you know.

KF: Because I can just see it. You know, you're huddled around the jukebox and, you know (laughter)

EA: Oh, it was-it was funny. It was crazy.

CC: Or you'd go home and get -buy the record and put it on a-

DA: Sure, yeah.

CC: -record player and let it go a little bit, write this stuff down. Stop it-

EA: Yes. Absolutely.

CC: -put the needle back on the vinyl.

EA: What the heck's he saying? What's that word, you know.

CC: Yeah, yeah.

KF: Mm, hmm.

EA: How many times have you done that? Oh, gosh.

CC: Yeah, yeah.

DA: It's a lot easier now with computers. You can just look up the lyrics. I like that.

CC: Yeah, yeah.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Where were those things when we needed them?

KF: Right. The one-

EA: What- what you thought were things you were singing-

KF: (laughter) Right.

EA: -when you actually see the written words.

DA: When you actually hear the lyrics.

KF: Yeah, that's right.

EA: Pretty funny stuff.

DA: Mostly I like my lyrics better. But sometimes they don't really resemble the stuff that's out there.

EA: Jimi Hendrix "Excuse me, while I kiss this guy"?

DA: I thought that's what he was saying –

EA: "Kiss the sky".

DA: Turns out he was singing "while I kiss the sky".

KF: Right. (laughter)

DA: Which, yeah.

KF: Yeah.

DA: I thought, "Wow. He's really sexually open here." You know.

KF: It gives a little twist to it. Yeah. I like that. But, you know, that's something that's changed that's made things easier. But what I hear you saying is something that's changed that I think is more difficult. You don't see these house bands. Uh...

DA: No.

KF: Anymore. So, if you want to make it as an artist in a band, you really do have to go on the road. I'm thinking. For the most part.

DA: Oh, yeah.

EA: You have no choice.

DA: And- and it's even that option is much, much slimmer than it used to be. Um, for years, groups supported themselves by touring to promote record sales. Well, now, record sales are just about non-existent. Everybody gets everything off the net for free and, um, the – so, the business- if I had to advise somebody who came up in -and our friends – still friends with a lot of guys we used to play with that I've known throughout the years and this comes up in conversation a lot. How lucky we were to hit that window of opportunity when you could actually do this for a living.

EA: Oh, it was perfect.

DA: Uh, without killing yourself. Without getting drugged out and crazy trying to stay awake so you could be in Keokuk in the morning.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Um, the guys who did this in the clubs, uh, long term, um, are well aware that it was a brief window of opportunity that maybe existed for that little period. And definitely does not exist now. Uh, it just isn't there. Clubs aren't there.

KF: Right.

DA: Umm. And Saginaw – when we were playing in that area- had 32 clubs with live music, six nights a week. And now I think they've got one or two places that have weekends and that's basically it.

KF: Right. And audiences have changed, right? I mean –

EA: Yes.

KF: -because they're not going to the- you have to have the audience going to those clubs.

EA: Yeah.

DA: Yeah.

KF: That much.

DA: It's a-

EA: It was a combination of things, um-

DA: Yeah, you're right.

EA: Drunk driving laws came in really –

KF: Mm, hmm.

EA: -strongly. Um, insurance. There were a lot of drunk driving accidents. Uh, night clubs had huge-

DA: Uh, our audience. The guys who supported themselves in the shops. The shops were running 24/7 then.

EA: The shops.

DA: You know, and – and

EA: And those jobs went south.

DA: Those jobs vanished to Mexico or Japan or wherever.

EA: And-and

DA: And that was our audience.

EA: Yes.

DA: Uh, so when that happened, uh, that life got tougher and tougher for us but a whole lot tougher for them.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Um, so there –it was – there were a lot of social forces at work here that worked for our favor for a long time and then didn't work so well.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: But who's complaining.

EA: Mm. No.

KF: No, no. Very rich career.

EA: Yes.

DA: Oh, we had a great time. We're still having a great time.

EA: Yes, we are.

CC: Are you still playing at all?

DA: No. No.

CC: You don't even pick up the instruments at all?

DA: I picked it up with Al and Elwood Smith probably five years ago.

EA: Yeah.

DA: And we just jammed for an afternoon. And that was the first time I'd had a guitar in my hands- uh, since I put it down.

CC: You know, in a way, I find that sad.

DA: Pardon?

CC: In a way, I do find that a wee bit sad because you're such talents and you're telling me you don't even sit in your living room together and play music.



DA: No.

CC: Ok.

DA: We did this – there are a couple of things at work there. One, if I really thought about it hard it would break my heart. Really.

CC: Ok.

DA: And that's what I avoid. Um, I don't have a broken heart and I'm doing fine.

CC: You're filling-

DA: But I think if I-

CC: -you're filling that void with your writing. That's what you're doing.

DA: That's exactly what I do. Sure.

KF: Mm, hmm.

DA: Yeah, I'm doing a story right now about a band. So, yeah, I get to do that.

EA: Oh, cool.

CC: I think you should be doing a story about you and Eve. The real deal. For real.

DA: Um...

CC: Exactly what you're telling us because I'm sure you could write a whole lot more. I think it would be fascinating.

DA: It would be on the Hallmark Channel. You know, how much fun would that be.

CC: I don't think so.

DA: I'd rather write, you know, about bodies turning up in odd places.

KF: Right.

DA: That's just so much more interesting to me.

KF: Right.

CC: I'm thinking about our class reunions.

DA: Yeah.

CC: And you did about three of them.

EA: Yeah.

DA: Yeah.

CC: And...

DA: We did them until it started to feel like a job.

CC: I'm sure you did. I'm sure that's true and-

DA: And the first couple-

CC: -you took very little pay for it.

DA: The first couple – oh, yeah, I don't even remember what that was. Doesn't matter. But we had a really good time. It was really fun.

CC: And your drummer spinning.

DA: Sure.

EA: Yes.

CC: That was the show. I mean, that-that the drum would spin.

KF: The drummer spinning?

DA: He was on a revolving – look we were in the clubs. We had to look like something. So, we had a complete light show. We had the drummer on a rotating drum stage.

KF: Wow!

DA: Um.

EA: It was a total gas station. A total gas station way up 100 feet in the air. This giant motor half the size of this table was on a pedestal and our drummer sat on that and he-

CC: And they brought that here to Alpena so that-

KF: How did you do that? How would you move something like that?

DA: In a truck.

EA: In a truck.

KF: Wow.

CC: They did that for the class reunion.

KF: Oh, that's so great.

CC: Class of '60.

DA: Oh, we had a – we had a great time.

EA: We did a 25-

DA: And we did that- I think we did three of them.

EA: Three of us – we had a 25-

DA: And after the third one – I didn't get a chance to talk to anybody because I'm playing all the time and it was starting-it was starting to feel like a job. So, we didn't do that after that. But the times we did it- it was really good fun.

EA: We were small in number but we had a huge show. We had a truck – a 25 foot truck.

DA: We had more guys on a road crew than we did on stage.

EA: We had a five man road crew.

KF: Mm-hmm.

EA: And three roadettes who happened to be-

DA: That was a Florida job.

EA: The girlfriend or the sister of one of the roadies.

KF: Right.

EA: Or something. Or our drummer. And they cleaned everything before it went up on stage.

KF: Mm-hmm.

EA: So these – and you know what their pay was?

KF: Hmm.

EA: Meatloaf sandwiches and chocolate chip cookies. That's what they got paid and two of the gentlemen we had dinner with last Thursday, um, they were supervisors at Ma Bell in Saginaw and we were their hobby.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: That's basically what we were. We were their hobby. And they stuck with us for years. And we had so much fun. But I didn't have to work. I mean, I'd show up and pick up my guitar and I'm ready to go.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Because everything's set. Everything's in tune.

EA: They put the lights up. They put the instruments up. They tuned it. They just did everything.

CC: And the name was Devil's Triangle.

DA: Yes. For 30- yeah, about 25 of those 35 years, yeah.

EA: Yes. Yes.

KF: OK. So, you had changed from D.A. and the Witnesses to Devil's Triangle.

DA: When we went down to Saginaw we became Devil's Triangle. We played-

KF: OK.

DA: We played Saginaw as D.A. and the Witnesses.

EA: Yes.

DA: Uh-

EA: When we got Ricky B, we -

DA: Yeah, we changed drummers. That was the thing.

EA: Yeah.

DA: Rick's birthday was on Halloween so we changed the name of the band.

KF: Mm-hmm.

EA: And we came- we were Devil's Triangle until we thought at some point we should just be The Triangle. And I think it had something to do with age but I can't remember.

DA: I'm not sure that that-

EA: I don't know. I thought it did but I'm not sure.

DA: A moot point anyway.

CC: I think you actually did change bring it down to The Triangle for one of our class reunions. I have no idea why.

DA: I think you might be right.

EA: The Tri- We were just The Triangle Band.

DA: You know, I'd forgotten about that. Yeah, you're right.

CC: And I'm thinking about

DA: It's probably when we became a quartet.

EA: Could be.

DA: No, I piled up a motorcycle in the late '80s and smashed up my right hand pretty good and, uh, uh, so at that point I had to have another guitarist come in and work with us and he did. Uh, a guitarist named Bud Kime worked with us for about ten years.

EA: Yeah, he stepped on the stage to do a one-weeker and wound up being there for ten years.

DA: And that's the business. You know, when you find people-

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: -who can do this that well, um, you have to take advantage of that. You know, Bud was a great player and he literally came in to help out because I smashed up my hand and he stayed for ten years.

KF: Was that the last ten years?

DA: The last ten years.

KF: OK. And how is your hand now? Does it still bother you?

DA: Oh, it's fine.

KF: OK.

DA: Uh, it's not as good as it was. You don't get to do this and get back. Uh, I had a mix-up with a power mower the other day. Uh, yeah, so bad things can happen sometimes. Um, but, um, we've always been really lucky.

EA: We have been.

DA: Nothing's really slowed us down. You know, like the time, until Rick's back surgery that was pretty much the – put paid to that. Uh, but it was OK. It was time to go and we knew that it was time. We knew that we would know it when it was time and it was.

KF: Mm-hmm.

EA: There's another drummer that I can't bring to mind, um, when Alan-

DA: How about Hezekiah?

EA: Alan Sabourin.

DA: Yeah, sure.

EA: Had a blowout on his motorcycle. Slid off, broke his wrist and somebody worked with us at the Acres.

DA: Bobby Riggs.

EA: Was it Bobby Riggs?

DA: Yeah, Bobby did. Yeah.

EA: OK. Alright.

KF: Now, Doug mentioned, you know, of course Doug's writing now-

DA: Sure.

KF: What are- what are you doing Eve, that you feel like, has kind of filled that. What is-

EA: (laughter) Oh, dear. When Doug started writing -

DA: She's foreman – foreman of a construction crew.

EA: Well, not, not then. I went to school and became a medical tech and worked in a Nuclear Diagnostic Center for ten years.

KF: OK.

EA: And that was absorbed when Genysis, a huge conglom came in and took over all the little satellite buildings.

KF: Mm-hmm.

EA: And I – after that ten years, I interviewed at Saginaw Medical and have been there for 21 years and I had a chance to transition into the construction end of the program, um, about seven years ago and I now have a seven man construction crew that I run.

KF: Oh, wow.

EA: That I'm responsible for. Booking the jobs and getting the jobs done. And that's what I do now. And it's really fun.

DA: Not too different from running a rock and roll band.

KF: That's right.

DA: Not so different.

KF: Yup. Yup. Moving that revolving drum thing. That's so great.

EA: It is. It really is.

KF: Yeah.

EA: It's been a good life and it's still.

DA: It's been a hoot. I mean, the whole thing was – I can't believe we got away with it.

EA: Well, I don't know –

DA: I mean, seriously, it feels like you won the lotto or something that you get to do something that was something you do for nothing on your night off. You know, who has- nobody- most folks don't have jobs they'd do for free on the one night that they've got to stay home. Uh, because on the one night that we got to stay home we would be in Otisville playing with, you know, the Buick City Blues Band or somebody. Um, that is just the music part of it is so much fun, uh, that you can't buy that.

EA: Here – there were a lot of times I remember Sunday afternoons-

DA: Oops, another name, Larry McCray. Blues singer out of Saginaw. Worked with Larry a number of times. Uh-

EA: There was a horn player, um, his nickname was just Doc. He was a great friend of-of Don Deadman. Don Deadman was very instrumental, by the way, in getting-

DA: I forgot about Don. Absolutely.

EA: -getting. Well, not only the fact that he was a musician but he actually, um, totally took apart Doug's saxophone so he could play and redid everything so he could play his saxophone everything with one hand and still play keyboards. And that was Don Deadman's doing.

DA: Yeah

KF: Wow. You were doing both at the same time?

DA: I can play them both at the same time. Yeah.

EA: Yes.

DA: Don rebuilt my horn so I could control the whole horn with one hand. And then I could play organ with the other hand.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Yeah, it was-

EA: But the guy was a great jazz fan. He was a friend of Don's.

DA: He played trumpet.

EA: And he was in the Air Force and he played trumpet. And there were times when there were little things. If people would come in for an afternoon at the Acres. People would come in and sit in.

DA: Sure.

EA: It was always great fun.

DA: The thing of- and going back to Don as a seminal figure in this area because his dad Austin Deadman, that was the guy who had Down Memory Lane. Don wound up taking over the music store and, uh, a great player himself and his son, uh-

CC: Carey.

DA & EA: Carey.

DA: Yeah, right.

KF: He plays now.

DA: Wound up playing trumpet with Frank Sinatra and various road bands, uh, this is absolutely top flight professional level people that came out of this-out of this town, out of this school system and out of the circle of musicians, uh, that were all supportive. I played with Don many times and-and, uh, great guy, you know, great friend. Um...it was-

EA: One of my fondest memories was – was when we played the last sock hop at Alpena High before it was torn down-

DA: That's right! I forgot about that!

CC: 1998. I just wrote it down.

EA: Did you write it down?

DA: Good for you. Yeah...

EA: That was...

KF: The last sock hop at Alpena High?

CC: I think, was that your last performance in Alpena?

DA: Yeah.

KF: This would've been 1998?



CC: Approximately 1998. When Alpena High was torn down.

EA: Torn down. The old high school.

KF: OK.

CC: We had three bands. We had, uh, The Triangle-

DA: Yeah. There was us. There was Don's band.

CC: Don's band and then we had-

DA: Al played with a group.

CC: Al-

EA: Uh-huh.

CC: With the Kirchoff brothers.

DA: That's right. That's right.

CC: So we had your rock and roll. We had country- and I do mean country- and then we had the easy listening.

DA: Sure.

CC: In fact, I got to perform with Don's band.

DA: Oh, did you play with Don's band that night?

CC: No, I sang. I was their singer.

DA: Oh, OK. Alright.

CC: I did some lounge music with him.

DA: Yeah

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: The trumpet player in that band was like 85 and he had a great set of chops.

CC: Yeah.

DA: White hair and I only got to meet him to say hi and I never knew his name. Do you remember that guy?

CC: I do. But I don't know his-

DA: Wonderful player.

CC: -name either. Yeah, it was a wonderful night and they were all spread out-

EA: It was.

CC: -across the gym.

DA: Yeah.

KF: This would've been- it became the junior high after the high school?

CC: Oh, no. This was before they tore it down.

DA: Last sock hop.

KF: Oh, OK.

CC: It was the last-

DA: This came out of a conversation we had played at the- we had done a folk music show. Uh, for the opening of the college theater- what's it called?

KF: Granum. Granum Theater.

DA: Yeah, that's right. We were the second group to play there. The Kingston Trio was first.

KF: Oh, OK. Yup.

CC: I was there that night.

KF: Yup.

DA: And, um, we did a murder ballad show. Uh, with a guy I barely knew. God, I love this business. Uh, with a fiddle player who came down from the U.P. that I'd only met once. Uh, and he did the show with us.

KF: OK.

DA: Um, his name is Pete Schindler and he's a wonderful player. But that's the nature of this business. If you know people who can do this. You literally can have a guy drift down from the U.P. and do a show with you that you don't really know. We met the night before at our place, ran through the material, then we did it at the Granum the next night.

KF: Mm, and would that have been before or after that sock hop?

DA: Well, that was where the sock hop came into being.

KF: OK.

DA: Because that was where the conversation came up that they were going to close the school.

EA: Tear it down.

DA: And we were just talking with a bunch of high school people that we knew from Alpena. Roger Bauer was there. Roger introduced us, in fact, that night.

EA: Mm-hmm.

DA: Uh, he was the M.C. And but we were talking about it afterwards and I don't know who brought it up but just the idea that, "We should do one last sock hop!" You know.

CC: Well, what they kind of did actually is they contacted people who had been in charge of their own class reunions.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Oh, OK.

CC: You know, that had went to Alpena High and graduated. And we all put our heads together and I think I was the one that contacted the bands.

DA: Yeah. Yeah, because we had the conversation and that was the last I heard of it until somebody said, "Hey, we're doing it." You know. OK, great! You know. And it was great. What a fun time that was.

CC: It was wonderful.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: That was the first time I'd seen Bobby Riggs in 30 years or something like that because we had played together and he's on the road. I'm on the road, you know. But Bobby came to the show that night. And that was the first time I'd seen him in a long time. Norm Seiss came by that night.

EA: Norm Seiss was there. Mm-hmm.

DA: Uh, so because if you'd ever been to that high school and, you know, unless you went to Catholic Central. You went to AHS. It's not like we had a whole lot of choice. But we got to see a lot of people we hadn't seen in forever. And, it was, playing in that gym after all those years. Wha-! I'll never forget that.

KF: Lot of memories.

EA: Mm-hmm.

KF: Yeah. Yeah.

DA: That was – you know what the best part- players love players. To me, the best part of the night was seeing Don's group. You know, I mean, I've played a million shows. I didn't care about my show. My show was fine. But it was really great fun to see Don's group playing the same stuff that they had been doing in the early '50s. And with that trumpet player – the guy's 85- he's got great chops and he was just playing way over his head. I've never forgotten that.

CC: The drummer was Saul Saretsky with them that night.

DA: Yes, it was.

KF: Ohhh-

EA: It was.

KF: He was a fantastic drummer.

DA: Yeah.

CC: He was the drummer.

KF: Mm-hmm.

CC: With the Don D. Trio.

KF: Mm-hmm.

CC: I believe that was-

EA: And they were all dressed to the nines.

CC: Oh, yes.

DA: Yeah. No, that was- that was magic. An awful lot of things that have happened in this thing are magical to me.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: To have been a part of that.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: How much luck do you want?

KF: Right.

DA: You know.

KF: What do you think – I'm just curious –

DA: Sure.

KF: What do you think accounts for- I've heard over and over again- just this explosion of musicians coming out of this area, in particular at that time, what-what do you think accounts for that?

DA: You know, I've given that some thought, um, and I honestly don't have a good answer because I can tell you that the level of players that came out of this town is extremely high. Uh, Tommy Ferguson, uh, Harvey Newman. There were any number of guys. Al Hizelman. Al was playing cocktail piano in DC a few years ago. Uh, just, you know, came across his name in passing. All of these guys were here at the same time. Part of it is the school system. The music sys- the teaching at that time with Bob Dunstan and Willard Fast and, um, it is just way above normal. We were getting very intensely schooled at literally a professional level when we were like 12-13-14 years old. And it was there if you wanted to take advantage of it and these guys were totally devoted to that work. I mean, I mentioned hearing Willard playing piano after he'd already put in a whole day teaching and he hurried home so he could practice.

KF: Well, it's like you playing on your off night.

DA: It is.

KF: Right?

EA: Yeah.

DA: It is. Exactly the same thing. It's so much – it's a gift. Uh, you don't earn this gift. You can't really cultivate it. All you can do is make the most of what you have. But it's a grace. And it's not something you deserve. Uh, because I sure didn't deserve it. Um, but once you have it, it's like if you don't take advantage of it, it's almost like an insult to whoever gave it to you assuming that somebody did. Um-

KF: That's right.

DA: But in terms of explaining why it was so high here. I would put- a lot of great musicians out of this town more than any other place I've ever played. And there are great musicians all over the world. I played with Filipinos. I played with Chinese guys- it's, you know, scary how good some guys are. But here it was there was so many of us that were – you know- playing at that level. It's hard to get a handle on why that is.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Donny Hartman. Bobby Riggs. Uh, any number of guys that came out of this town who were really, really talented.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: And I don't know why we all wound up in the same place at the same time. But that really is what it is. It was almost serendipitous that we did.

KF: That's great. Did you have any other questions, Carole?

CC: I don't think so, uh. So, at this point, we will say, unless you have another story that you'd like to tell us – and they've all been fascinating –

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: Other stories – give me half a second. Um, no, and I'm just – I haven't thought about this in-depth until you mentioned it that we were doing this and it's a great idea. You know, it is. Uh, because the window that was open from say the mid-'60's into the '90's is closed now. You know, that doesn't exist anymore. Uh, recently I saw an article in the Flint Journal about two singers from other bands. Uh, and we had known both of these girls, uh, in Flint when we were playing down there. We were comp- we were competitors- friendly competitors. So we knew who they were and they knew who we were, etc., but in the course of the article it mentioned that neither of them- and they're both very talented musicians- neither of them had ever been able to support themselves with their music. And when we started everybody we knew was supporting themselves through their music. Uh, and it was not only possible, it was normal. And that does not exist anymore. If a young friend asks me if he should go into this business. Um, when our son graduated from high school- was getting ready to graduate from high school and he's a really talented player himself. He's a drummer, uh, who was playing serious drums when he was five years old. Um, grew up around rock and roll as a way of life. He wanted to – he asked me as his senior year was rolling around if I would feel bad if he didn't go into the music business. He wanted to go into corporate America. He wanted to study engineering. And, uh, I just felt this amazing flood of relief. Um, no, you want to be an engineer. What a great idea! You know, because the life that we were in, I could already see it winding down. You could see where this world was going and it was not- it was getting narrower not wider.

EA: It took a long time to get there. Another ten years.

DA: Yeah, then I thought it would. Sure.

EA: Actually, another fifteen years.

DA: Um, I might add that when – he went to the University of Arizona and, uh-

EA: On a music scholarship.

DA: Well, he didn't have it when he got there though.

EA: Nope.

DA: He wal- he did a walk-in on campus. Just saw a sign up, uh, that they were auditioning for, uh, the college band. And he just walked in coming out of the same background and got a full scholarship. Uh, they picked up the whole tab. Free ride –

EA: He also had good training. High school- high school training.

DA: Yeah, he happened to have-

EA: Good music program.

DA: Right. He went to Montrose High which, in that era, happened to have another professional musician as a teacher who was really, really good. Uh, they won state championships in band competitions during his tenure and Doug was lucky enough to study under this guy who also was a drummer. Uh, so when he went to- when he went to Arizona he said it was – compared to the level of the other kids that were auditioning- it was a walk. He said, “I could do this with, you know, with my eyes closed. It’s no problem.” And he immediately got a music scholarship which was kind of nice.

EA: Yeah.

DA: Uh, yeah. Uh, he only kept it for a year. Uh, because he was an engineer and it wasn’t where he was going.

KF: Right.

DA: But, uh, for a year, he got a free ride.

CC: Is he still playing music?

DA: Uh, yeah, he plays in praise bands, uh, now but he was never – he never played professionally.

EA: And in an alternative band.

DA: Yeah.

EA: The-the-

DA: Oh, yeah, that’s right.

EA: The Moving something Circus.

DA: The Floating Opera.

EA: Floating Opera.

DA: Yeah, which is a college band. He’s in Nebraska. It’s a college band out of Lincoln. At the University of Nebraska and he’s a member of that group.

EA: They're all college professors.

DA: Yeah.

CC: So, you handed on – I hear son. You have one child.

DA: One-

EA: One boy. Yeah.

CC: So, you've hand- you've handed your talent on to him. In however he wants to use it. That's a wonderful thing.

DA: What do you think about the talent? Where does that come from?

CC: Well, I've thought about that, too, but-

DA: I think every player thinks about it.

CC: Of course. Mi-

DA: But what do you- what do you think?

CC: Mine came from absolutely my grandmother and my father.

DA: OK. Yeah, mine, too.

CC: You know, 'cuz we can discuss that later but –

DA: OK.

CC: That's where mine came from.

DA: Sure.

CC: But I'm still ploying mine today.

DA: OK.

CC: So, just because I have time to do it and just because I don't care if I get paid.

DA: Yeah, that part of it is a, uh -

CC: Occasionally, yes, but not very often.

DA: OK. One quick story. Probably ten – twelve years ago, I got a call from a sax player friend of mine that said that Larry McCray, blues player out of Saginaw with a national reputation who had been opening for ZZ Top on the road, uh, had just flown back from Europe and we're getting together. OK, so we put this band together. We set up in a club in Flint, north end of Flint, um, I



get there and the only guys that I knew- eight guys on stage – the only guys that I knew were Larry who I hadn't seen in years and this other sax player, Bobby Zuck. Um, Bobby had to bail. So, now I'm on stage with seven guys that I don't know at all. And all I remember is the piano player was from New Orleans and that's it. I literally don't know anybody's name. We did the first set mostly of Larry's material which was all new hadn't heard any of this but it's blues so I can play this. But that was bar none the scariest band I've ever been a part of. I literally didn't know anybody else on the stage. Eve was sitting in the audience watching this. And everybody on that stage was a monster. Every player. And Larry, who is a brilliant player himself, he's backing up for people to let them solo because everybody that took a turn got better and I thought I was OK when I got onstage but as it's my turn to come around again everybody was blowing me away. You know, you've got to come up with something really special here.

EA: Step up your game.

DA: Uh, Eve was in the audience watching this. She's sitting with these guys and-

EA: That I didn't know. The place was packed-

DA: The place was jammed.

EA: And there was a seat, so I said, "Can I sit. Sure."

DA: And the kid said, "That's the best band I've ever heard in my life."

EA: "Where are they going next?"

DA: "Where are they gonna be?" And Eve said, "That's not a band at all. Those guys have never played together before." And that was the truth. Um, you can't buy a night like that. You know, that's why you play on your night off. Uh, that was magic. And I, to this day, don't know half the guys who - I met the guitar player later. He was the front man for a group called The Blue Hawaiians. But he's the only one I even met. And, um, the second drummer was named King something. That's it.

EA: Yeah.

DA: That's all I got. I literally didn't have a name.

EA: And somebody with the last name of Pettigrew and that's-

CC: So, it was a one time gig.

EA: A one time thing.

DA: A one time thing. We played three sets and that was the end of that.

KF: Was that a jazz gig? Was that-

DA: No, we were playing blues.

KF: Oh, OK.

DA: He was a blues player. But it was – the keyboard player was from New Orleans- a piano player. Uh, and he was playing original material. He would be calling chord changes as we went through the song. And everybody was good enough that he could do that. And sing. And we're playing original material that none of us had ever heard. Um, man, you can't buy a night like that. That's magic. And I have no explanation for-

EA: For how it works.

DA: Or why it works.

EA: Or why it works.

DA: Uh, but it-it does.

KF & CC: Mm-hmm.

DA: That feeling – that one time shot that you get. Uh, you can't pay for that. Nobody can pay you to do it. You know, and in that case, we never met up again. That was a one- strictly that one night – and I literally don't know who those guys were. Um, but to have a career doing that for a living. You've gotta be kiddin'. You know.

KF: Right.

DA: I feel like I robbed a bank and got away with it or something. That is just amazing.

KF: Well, it's exciting to be that far into your career and have a moment where you feel, "Ooh, I'm on the edge here." You know, I think that –

DA: Absolutely. Yeah. It's great.

KF: -breathes life into- yeah.

DA: You see, as a writer that still happens all the time.

KF: Mm-hmm.

DA: As a musician, not so often, but, uh, 'cuz the most fun is finding a group that you can for a lot of years, uh, on our nights off there was the group out of Flint called The Buick City Blues Band and I knew those guys. Uh, I was writing for The Flint Journal then as a music writer and I'd interviewed them. Really liked the band. So, I started showing up on my nights off so I could play with them. Uh, and we'd meet other players over there sometimes you would have four or five guys on stage that weren't part of the original band. Um, all of us playing for free. It was- there aren't

many careers like that. You know, that you get that much fun out of that you're not the only one showing up. Everybody's doing this and they'd do it for nothing.

EA: Did you ever think of that as a career?

DA: No.

EA: I never- I never thought of that-

DA: No, no, it really wasn't. I never thought of it as my job. You know.

EA: No. No. It was- it wasn't a job.

DA: Well, it was. I mean, we treated it like one.

EA: It was. It-it didn't feel like it.

DA: No, it didn't feel like it. It never felt like one.

EA: You should know that, right?

DA: Right.

EA: Carole?

CC: I do.

EA: Yes.

CC: I do.

EA: Yup.

CC: I do. Well, with that, it's been a very interesting interview. I'm sorry I was a little bit late but I learned a lot-

DA: I figured you slept in. I called you for crying out loud. Wake up.

CC: I was already on the road.

DA: Oh, OK.

KF: Yeah.

EA: You're forgiven.

CC: I'm forgiven.

KF: Yeah.

CC: Again, thank you so very, very much.

KF: Thank you.

DA: It was my pleasure.

EA: Thank you for doing this. This should be interesting.

