

Interview with JayDee
by the famous Big Jim Baron

JIM- You were raised down in Calexico and Riverside County?

JD- Yeah, Moreno, it was called Sunnymead then. It's where the old Riverside Raceway used to be. It was a big time raceway - it'd been there for years. It's no longer there. It's ten miles east of Riverside proper. On the 60 freeway headed toward Palm Springs.

JD- Luaine, (his wife) I moved to the San Fernando Valley in 1968. I met her out there in a place called Perris, California. Where we lived was right there at March Air Force Base, just north of there. I went to school in Riverside and Sunnymead. I met my wife, who was 16 when we met, and we got married a couple years later and moved to the Valley. Been there ever since.

JIM- So you moved to the Valley, what, to be closer to the music?

JD- I got a job in music down there, and decided to be closer to where everything was happening. At that time there was a lot going on.

JIM- Is that when you started at the Palomino Club?

JD- About 1970, became part of the house band.

JIM- So you were part of the House Band at the Palomino for umteen years?

JD- Yeah, well, it was kind of speckled along the way. I was there part of the time and gone part of the time. I started in 1970 and worked for about three and a half years. In 1974 we moved to Nashville (with my wife and kids).

JIM- Oh yeah, out there with Ray Stevens.

JD- Yeah. In 1975 we came back to LA, and I went right back to work at the Palomino. I was there most of the time from 75 to 84 with 3 or 4 different bands. Then we started the Desert Rose Band in 84 and I was with them till about 90- then back to the Palomino until 97~98.

JIM- The Palomino is no longer there is it?

JD- It's there, but it's no longer the Palomino. Some people bought it and made it into a hall to rent for parties, etc. They actually fixed it up pretty nice. It looks too good for the area. Yeah, we worked there right up 'till about 1998 or something. We had talent night every week. They had a lot of rock and roll things going on in there. It just finally fell by the wayside. Time just took over.

JIM- Tell me something, how'd you ever get hooked on the steel guitar?

JD- Well, I was a young kid, my neighbors had a lap steel. It was a Magnatone- pearl white lap steel with a matching amplifier. And I really liked the color. So my Dad bought it for me and it

cost \$50 bucks- for both pieces. We were really poor and he bought it and paid it off on time. That was the beginning of my steel guitar life.

JIM- Was that actually about the same time you started your lessons, then?

JD- Right after that. This already had the numbers on there. It was a 12-week course and I never went back for the 12th one. It was boring to me, and I just never went back. Like everything I do, I get into it gung-ho and after I learn a little bit I kind of not go back. I go my own way.

JIM- When you were young and starting to play steel who became your idols or people who influenced you?

JD- Well, it's a little bit of a long story. My real big influence to begin with was Luther Perkins. By then I had my second lap steel, it was a Supro, a sunburst model. I still have that one but I took all the finish off it so it's no longer a sunburst. But I liked the Luther Perkins sound and I tried to do that on the steel with a straight E tuning - and I did do it. I got pretty good at it. I went to see Johnny Cash play one time at a place called Rolling Hills Barn Dance in Riverdale, California- just west of Riverside. And my Dad took me there - it was a big thrill to watch those guys play. That's where they had chicken wire around the bandstand and that whole thing. That building is still there. It's an auction house now. Anyway, I asked Marshal Grant, the base player, about what he thought about the steel player doing that Luther Perkins style. He said, well, it's OK, but the guitar players are going to do it, steel players aren't going to get to play it all the time. So, for whatever reason, seven years later, I forgot about that and started to play the steel. I have to say that Lloyd Green has been my biggest influence. A lot of the guys have, Buddy Emmons, Lloyd and Weldon Myrick, those three guys actually did wonders for my thinking. And today Lloyd Green is one of the most innovative players on the planet when it comes to traditional steel guitar.

JIM- He can think different.

JD- Well, he's a very intelligent guy. He's got a very high IQ. He plans his playing. He works that stuff out. The difference is I don't. I just get in there like a blind dog in a meat house and go for it. But he's a good friend-he's an old friend. I just spent some time with him recently in Nashville. We go back a long ways. We both played with the Sweethearts of the Rodeo album back in 68.

JIM- Wanted to talk about that album also.

JD- Well, course it was the Byrd's album, Sweethearts of the Rodeo. They did part of it in Nashville and part of it in LA. Of course the part in Nashville Lloyd played on, and when they came to LA I played on it. Graham Parsons was an acquaintance at the time. Of course, I wanted to be a studio player and I made that known. I did every bit of it I could. Graham called me one day and says "Hey, you want to play on this album I'm doing?" So I actually went and played on that, and it's become part of history. Although it was the second time with Graham. He had a band called The International Submarine Band. It's in re-print now- you can get it. And he was leader of that band, and we recorded that. It was before Sweetheart of the Rodeo.

JIM- What kind of music was that?

JD- Pretty much the same as the Byrds sounded. Cause Graham wanted to be a country singer, country rock, so the theme of both records was the same. On The International Submarine, Glen Campbell played rhythm guitar, when he was just beginning to be somebody.

JIM- Tell me, how do you record a steel guitar and make it sound good?

JD- There's a lot of different opinions about recording a steel guitar, and I have been fighting this whole thing since I started recording 35~40 years maybe. You know, most people right now go direct pretty much when they record. And I haven't found a way to do that, to make it sound good to me. You know, it sounds very small and kind of in the middle between these huge guitars, and I mean, that's a mix thing later, but not what I'm looking for. But going direct, if you go straight into the board from a steel, it hardly ever sounds right. Although, I do it, if I see one flight of stairs I have to walk up, I always carry the guitar and a cord. I hate carrying an amplifier up the stairs. I'm not using a processor. That's a good way to do it, but the problem being, that I found, is that these processors and guitar pre-amps are made for guitars. They're not made for steel guitars. We have to make them work for us. Modify you know, like all these blue tube preamps, we just have to modify them to make them work, because you can distort these things real easy. I mean you got a steel guitar with 20 - 22000 ohm pickups. Where a guitar maybe has 6,000 on them. And you plug a steel in there and the needle's going to jump clear to the right side- it's going to distort. And it's not going sound right, tone wise. And if you could have a processor with 35 or 40 or 50 different sounds in it, you might find 1 or 2 that will work for you for the steel. It's really a problem.

JIM- Most of the guys I know, they spend 10 hours modifying just one. You sit down at somebody else's and you can't play their modification, no matter what.

JD- Yeah. I don't want to pick on certain brands, but you know like the Profex, everybody has their own idea of how that thing sounds, and you know with all those sounds in there, there's still not one that really makes the steel guitar sound like it supposed to.

JIM- I think we all have "that" sound in our head and it's like trying to play with our head...we can't do that either I guess. We can't get the sounds in our heads out. The sound that's going in is not the sound that's coming out.

JD- Yeah, it's a tough thing, you know, recording steel. I still think the best way to do it is through an amplifier. Where you're moving air. When you got a speaker moving air, you got a microphone in front of it, and you can take the microphone, if you don't like the tone, and move it. For years and years, if I needed to change the tone a little bit, I didn't turn to the treble or bass knobs if it was close cause I always ran my stuff the same. I just moved the microphone, either closer to or further away from the cone or between the center and side.

JIM- You want closer to the cone for what?

JD- It gets brighter.

JIM- And further away from the cone it gets darker?

JD- Yeah. So I always positioned it in the middle.

JIM- And if you were lying on a straight axis with the center of the cone you

walk to the side you got

JD- If you go to the side it got darker.

JIM- The further to the side you get..

JD- Yeah.

JIM- And then start from there and go backwards and forwards 'till you find what you want.

JD- And when you hear one playback you get where you know which way to go. You hear the playback and go, ah, it's a little too dark, so you move it closer to the cone. You know, by an inch or half and inch at a time. And it works. Of course, now everybody wants you to play direct. It really is easier and cleaner and quieter. Tone is something that a lot of us people have forgotten what it really is. Good tone. Engineers, especially in California, they'll go, "Oh, sounds like a steel to me." They really don't have a clue.

JIM- I think it was Emmons that said there hasn't been a good steel sound recorded since 1973 or something like that.

JD- I agree.

JIM- So the first time you hit the road was with Buck Owens, right?

JD- Buck Owens, about 1969, for about a year.

JIM- Then you got your first shot at Hee Haw.

JD- I did. We were actually the House Band for Hee Haw. We locked out everybody. We flew to Nashville on whatever day, went straight from the airport to the studio. We didn't even go to the hotel first. Went right to the studio set up our stuff and here we are with the House Band. We did the first 13 of those shows. We worked for two weeks on those shows, that was a whole year's worth. They weren't in sequence. They would do all the cornfield scenes, and other scenes, then cut them together. I remember talking to Roy Clark about this, and he was saying, "Well I don't know what the hell they're doing here. I can't see how this is going to work". And we were trying to figure out what the sequence was going to be to make a show. But I guess they figured it out - the show ran for, what, 25 years? I just remember it was a lot of work. But it was fun, because it was show business - it was what we really wanted to do- playing with Buck Owens and that. We were flying out on the weekend between recordings, doing some road gigs on a jet. We would do all the artists that we were going to back who didn't bring a band. Do them all in a row, then they'd do the cornfield things. Then they cut the thing together. I did 13 of those shows and that was it.

JIM- Then you stayed with Owens till the end of that year?

JD- I can't tell you exactly the time I left but it was about a year.

JIM- Were you just tired of the road?

JD- Well, I don't know if I should say what happened. It wasn't a very pretty situation. Buck really wanted to try his band without steel after Tom left. I came in after Tom. I had been doing his demo's for him for quite a while, for Blue Book music. Since Tom had left the band he wanted to try it without a steel but he hired me anyway. I was a young guy and he figured he could probably mold me to what he wanted and have me play like Tom or Ralph Mooney. And that never worked because I didn't want to play like those guys - I couldn't. He gave me a whole set of his albums. The whole set of every album he'd made so far, and said, "Here, take these home and learn these parts." And I have to tell you, probably half those albums have never been opened to this day. So, the long and the short of it was, after we worked together there was a little bit of a personality conflict there. He called me one Sunday morning, said "Son, I'm going to send Mike down to pick up all the boots, all the guitars, everything." He said "I'm going to run the band without a steel." And that's how I was fired - I was fired over the phone. And I had no grudges against Buck. He did what he thought he wanted to do. We get along great these days, he's a good guy - he's mellowed - I've mellowed.

JIM- You were other at one time?

JD- Yes, well, could have been.

JIM- When you were playing with Buck, was Don Rich still alive?

JD- Yes, Don was still alive. Well, while I was with Buck, it was Don Rich, Doyle Holly, Jerry Riggings on drums, myself and Buck. Now, my first night to play with Ray Stevens, in 1974, is where I heard about Don's death. We were sitting in a dressing room trailer, ready to go on stage, and some guy come running in and says, "Hey, did you hear about Don Rich? He was killed today." We were just five minutes from going on stage. Don Rich was a good friend. He taught me a lot. That whole Buck Owens experience taught me a lot about travel, how to conduct myself. One time I went to Canada with Buck. We had to make out these little forms, which you still have to - you know, immigration forms. At that time you didn't do it until you got to the airport. They'd take you to a little room, you'd sit there and fill out the forms. So I was doing this, a young kid, didn't know nothing about nothing. And it got down to where it said, Occupation, and I wrote down musician. Buck came along and said "Hey, make out another one, and when it gets down to Occupation, you don't put musician. You are an entertainer, not a musician. Always put entertainer. And I always do that to this day. That just ups the class a little bit. So, it's things like that I learned that are valuable.

JIM- I understand you played at Carnegie Hall.

JD- Yeah. I played there three times. I played there once with Freddy Fender, well, it was a package deal. Freddy Fender, Don Williams, Hank Thompson, and Roy Clark. We played with Freddy and backed up Roy Clark. This was back in the Palomino days around 1976, 77 maybe. Then later on I played there twice with the Desert Rose Band. We toured with Reba Mcintyre, she took the whole package with her. It was quite an experience. We played in New York City quite a bit. There we played The Bottom Line, which is a well known club there.

JIM- Did you get to play the Grand Ole Opry?

JD- I got to play the old Ryman one time with Dell Reese. A friend of mine was playing in his band. At that time the artists could bring in guests, whoever they wanted. So this friend of mine, Larry Sasser, was playing with Dell, said come on in and we'll both play with Dell. So we played - I have pictures of that, actually. Then I played the Grand Ole Opry itself with Desert Rose Band a couple times.

JIM- How about movies, like Clint Eastwood's, or...

JD- Well, there's several, but the one that always comes to mind is the movie "The Longest Yard" with Burt Reynolds. I played in that. But there's been lots of them. At the time doing movies was just like another day at the office.

JIM- It isn't until down the road a bit and you see the picture and think "Oh, wow!"

JD- Yeah. Which is actually what happened with those Clint Eastwood films - 'cause he did all those in a row. I got to work with so many artists. Charlie Rich, Fats Domino and a whole bunch of people.

JIM- So you don't do movies anymore?

JD- No, I don't get too many calls for that anymore.

JIM- It was just the trend of the times?

JD- Well, Doug Livingston still does a little bit of movies, but he's a really good reader on the steel...so it makes a difference. But he doesn't do a whole lot either. And when I do get a call, it's for stuff called "source". Source music means you hear a band in the background, or you hear somebody singing in the background while the dialog is in the front. And then I did the Dukes of Hazard, which we did for seven seasons.

JIM- How did that come about?

JD- Well, I knew the writer at the time, his name was Fred Werner. He came to the Palomino club and heard me play. He told the contractor he wanted to get that guy to play in his show which was going to be Dukes of Hazard. So I was called for the thing. It was Waylon Jennings doing the narations. A lot of people thought that it was Waylon's band doing all the music, but it was a studio band. There was Tommy Morgan on harmonica, a long time session guy, and Larry McNeeley on banjo. They had four guitar players on every show. We had drums, bass, sometimes percussion, sometimes a horn section. Also, Doug Livingston played steel guitar and doubled on piano. So there were two steel players, two piano players ...it was a handful. If you could play the charts this week, next week would be a little tougher. And that's were I learned to read cut time, half time. Because the writers got paid by the bar, so if they wrote twice as many bars, they got paid for it. In Larry McNeeley's case they would put brackets around, say four bars, and say, just play. Just play 'till I give you the cutoff. He'd play them over and over 'ti he'd get the cutoff.

JIM- Was it the same with you?

JD- A lot of times.

JIM- You were playing a lot of your own stuff then

JD- Yeah, that fast chase stuff. Because early on he wanted me to read some parts, and of course I didn't know how to do it. So Fred came in one day and said, "Hey, listen. I want to hire another steel player." So I thought, OK, I'm either fired or....He said, "It's nothing to do with you, I want you to play the chases, and I'm going to get this other guy, Doug Livingston, to play the written parts. When they're sneaking around doing the "mysterioso", and he'll double on the piano. So I said, "I'll tell you what. You can put steel players all the way around these walls in this whole room, as long as I'm one of them." He said "You've got a deal."

JIM How was the shootin' on that done?

JD- Yeah, every week. Usually on Wednesdays was our day to be at Warner Brothers for that show. They had a big million dollar budget per episode on that show. I remember Tom Wopat telling me "I'm making more money than I know what to do with. I absolutely don't know what to do with all the money I'm making." I think he made like \$60,000 a week. Of course now that's nothing. And it was the beginning of Wopat's and John Snyder's career. It put them on the map .It was a great babysitter, if you think about it. Cause kids liked it because of all the car chases and crashes.

JIM- What about us old folks? We were glued there too. You can still see it on TNN.

JD- Well, yeah. All the time. And we don't get paid for that.

JIM- You had a nomination for NARAS? What is NARAS?

JD- NARIS is National Academy for Recording Arts and Sciences. They are actually the garnering entity for the Grammys.

JIM- So if you were a nominee for NARAS, that means you were up for a grammy?

JD- No. It was for specialty instrument. This was way back in 1985. I got beat out by a guy who played kettle drums. I think Cliff Stone put my name in there for that.

JIM- And you went all the way to the end?

JD- Yeah. The awards show was held in a restaurant down on Ventura Blvd. called Carlos and Charlie's.

JIM- You got ACM Steel Player of the Year for 15 years.

JD- I have 23 of those statues. Some for band of the year for Desert Rose, for club band in the Palomino. But I think there's 15 or 16 for steel player. Not all in a row, but I do have more of those trophies than anybody - ever, anywhere.

JIM- And you got Guitar Player People's Choice Award in 88 thru 91. That's in Guitar Players Magazine.

JD- That was called The Reader's Poll. I think they still do that. But I didn't make the fifth one. I wish I had, cause then you go into what they call The Gallery of the Greats.

JIM Back to the Desert Rose Band. I remember you saying that was probably your best time playing ever.

JD- I think it's the best playing I've ever done. There are some things on there that are just OK, but a big part of those songs are really, I think, my best playing. The first album wasn't mixed all that great so the steel was down. But later on John Jorgensen went to Nashville and helped mix. He really brought everything up to level - guitars, steel, and all that. I'm really proud of some of that stuff. I haven't played on anything that good since.

JIM- What made that so good for you - why were you so satisfied with that?

JD- You know, at the time, all we were worried about was getting our next album out. It was a day at the office - we had to go in and do these songs. But after they were done, some years later, I realized that these actually were milestones. People who know about Desert Rose, they'll be remembered forever. The problem being we didn't get the recognition across the board that we should have. Because the labels were dealing with a group - we were one of the first groups to come about in a long time. And when labels have to deal with groups, they have to deal with all the personalities in that group- and they don't like it. They focus on the principals they called it. Which was the three guys - Chris Hilman, Herb Peterson and John Jorgensen. There's a whole lot involved there - we never got label support. We paid all our own bills - so we didn't make a lot of money. But musically it was a really good time in my life because I had to make myself a place to play. John Jorgensen wanted the band to be more rock and roll, I wanted to be country, and it wound up being a charm in the middle. So I played all the time. That was the reason I made such a statement - musically.

JIM- Do you go back and listen to those?

JD- I listen to them all the time. I walk on the treadmill 4 or 5 times a week and I put tapes on, or CDs, and I do listen to those things.

JIM- Do you say, "Oh, if I'd just would have done this"?

JD- Very little of that.

JIM- Or do you listen to it and go "Wow, this is alright."?

JD- That's kind of the way I feel, I'm thinking "wow, that's not me playing."
And I have to kind of keep up on that, because I go to Norway every two or three years and those guys like to do those songs over there. I'll be going back over in August for about 10 days. One of the years we went, we were right up to the Artic Circle and all it was was a little rock pile. We went right by it in a train, and went, "There's the Artic Circle right there." We really enjoy going to Norway. Those people have become really good friends - we enjoy their company.

JIM- You ever build a steel?

JD- No, not really. But I think I was one of the first people to put one together in a kit form. I called Ron Lashley and said I want another guitar. I've had a couple Emmons guitars. They gave

me one on the set of Hee Haw. It wasn't actually a gift, but it was one of my first new Emmons. And after a couple of those, I said I want a guitar in kit form, cause I want to put it together the way I want it. So, he sent it to me. And every single piece was there. There was nothing missing. And I've done that 3 or 4 different times since.

JIM- Well, I'll be darned, they were push pulls?

JD- Yeah. It saved them the time and I got it a little cheaper. At that time you could buy a double neck Emmons for \$1,400. Now they're worth more than that. The same year guitar is worth way more than that. I also worked at Fender Guitar. I played three nights a week at a place called The Aces Club and worked for Fender in the daytime for about a year.

JIM- What did you do at Fender?

JD- I was a tester. The test to get the job was - they handed me a Buck Owens model Telecaster with the sparkle and the binding and all the stuff. It was all detuned, except for the E note - first string. I set down and tuned it up. They said if I could do that I had the job. Our job was, these guitars came through, all different models, Strats, Telecaster, Jaguars, and we'd lay them on the bench, put the pick guard on, put all the screws on, string them up, and play every note on every fret. We couldn't play any music, which I couldn't do anyway, you couldn't play any songs, they didn't allow that. So we played every note on every string to make sure it didn't buzz. Set the neck with that screw, sometimes jump up and down on it, keep the neck true as we could. If it did buzz, we'd loosen all the strings, file the frets, and put them back on there, and get the guitar where it was playable. Send it on the way to the next guy. We had to do 60 of those a day. And that was a big day.

JIM- You tuned and played 60 guitars a day?

JD- Yeah, and if you couldn't do 60 you were gone. And once in a while you'd get one in your hands and go, now this thing plays great. But most of them were just average. And send it on down the line. They had an actual piece of a file glued or taped to a wooden block. We'd sand them by hand, the clipboard and all, 'cause there was no finish on them at all. String it up and send it on down. They used to make the necks by hand. We'd sand those necks all by hand on a sander. They'd shape all those necks by hand, some of them were really cool, some were not.

JIM- Tell me about Misty...how did Misty come about?

JD- During the days at the Palomino, with the Booth brothers, Larry and Tony Booth, Tony was the band leader when I started in 1970 and his brother played bass. Great singers. There are the brothers I never had. We used to do Misty as a break song. Kind of Bluegrass style. Three chords, no matter what, that's all. But it only lasted 8 bars or half a song. Years later, when I went to work with Stevens we were talking about songs and I said, you know we used to do Misty as a break song. I forgot why it came up, but Stevens is a guy who likes odd things. Obviously he likes off the wall stuff, so I told him about us doing that. And he goes, "really"? I said, yeah, it was fun, it was kind of stupid, because the song was a beautiful tune with all those changes. He started playing with that thing on the piano, and the next thing you know we were in the studio cutting that song. This was like on a Friday we cut this song, and on Monday I was out of there, moving back to LA 'cause I had already made my decision to leave this band. Because when it started (kind of off the subject a little) he gave me the job. Larry Sasser had

that job. Then he told me he was going to stay in town and not go out on the road anymore. This was my chance to get to Nashville. So Stevens offered me 12 days a month on the road. He had a couple hit records, The Streak, and The Business Man. While he had good records, he liked working and we were on the road 12 days a month. And I thought that was perfect, cause that's the rest of the time I could hustle record dates in town. Well as soon as The Streak died down, so did the work. And it went down to 4 days a month. And my wife and I had bought a house there, I wasn't doing any sessions yet, I hadn't spent my five-year probation. We were so unhappy, so homesick, I called her from Louisiana, and I said, you know what, when I get back home, let's move back to LA. She said, "It's done". So when I got home, like on a Wednesday, she had everything packed and in the truck. I went to the studio on Friday, we cut Misty, Monday we were gone.

JIM- And a month or whatever it took...

JD- Yeah, Misty hit. He won a Grammy for that record. I actually played on the Grammy show with him, which was held in LA. When we got to the solo part, as soon as I hit that first note, my third string broke. On TV. I'll never forget that. So there goes my solo out the window. I faked my way through it. Instead of like we do now, we kind of know how long the third's been on there, so we keep a change, I didn't do that. And I remember Captain and Taneal were on that show too. They won a bunch of awards that year. So that's my Ray Stevens story.

JIM- I doubt you regret it.

JD- No, That was kind of like Buck Owens. It was a really good experience. I got a lot of exposure. Under the best conditions the road is horrible. You get to where you don't know where you are, and you don't care. People ask me where I'm going and I say I don't know, I haven't looked at the itinerary today.

JIM- Tell me about the Anne Murray thing. You had a big one on "Can I Have This Dance".

JD- Yeah. A real good friend of mine, Jim Ed Norman, was head of Warner Brothers, Nashville, at that time, was a record producer. His record promoter was Bruce Hampton, one of the heads of MCA in Nashville for years. They were working together and had a company called Hengen (for Henton and Jim Ed Norman). Jim Ed was doing records in town, and he also arranged and played piano on a lot of the Eagles songs. He called me one night when I was at the Palomino working. He said "when you get done tonight can you come over here and play on this record?" I said sure, and it wasn't late at night so I went over there. It was an Anne Murray record, "Could I Have This Dance." Like I say, it was just another day at the office. I said, great, I have another session, so I go over and do it - well, it became a hit. It's played on the radio even to this day. Yeah. Well, Jim Ed Norman, to this day, is a good friend, and I can walk in there and he'll greet me at the door, or I can call him on the phone. He's the first guy to ever give me a record for my wall.

JIM- That's the Anne Murray one?

JD- Yeah, because it's the first record he ever got - that he earned for an artist. So he called me and said "Hey, I've got this record for you." And I thought he was going to give me a copy of the LP. I went over there to pick it up and it was this nice frame, 500,000 copy record for my wall. So it was a nice thing on his part. I think I have 6 or maybe 7 on my wall now. I wish I had one for everything I played on.

JIM- You wouldn't have a wall big enough.

JD- The house wouldn't be big enough. I have a few of them. There are some people who don't believe in hanging them. Paul Franklin told me, "Yeah, I don't like hanging that stuff, it makes it look like I'm trying to promote myself, or make myself feel better." But I don't feel that way. I feel the only people who are going to see that stuff are people I want to see it. And if it's all sitting there in boxes - I mean, I have boxes of it. I just feel like, if nothing else, it will be good for my kids when I'm gone. They can have that stuff.

JIM- Some of the things you play, be glad you don't have to learn them.

JD- I don't play anything hard.

JIM- Wrong! Wrong!

JD- That came from an old Indian friend of mine, Buddy Emmons. He always says, "I don't play nothing hard."

JIM- Do you have any favorite stories you'd like to throw in here?

JD- Well, I can tell you about the first Emmons guitar I ever had. The first Emmons guitar I ever had came from Buddy. It was a black Emmons and I believe it was the one he played Night Life on. When I was going to go to work for Buck Owens I was playing a show, one of those change-over, cross-over things. And a friend of mine, Scott Turner, who was working for Electra Records at the time, a pretty well-known guy, called Buddy and said, "Hey, this kid's gonna go to work for Buck Owens and he needs a guitar." So Buddy sent this black Emmons. It was a borrowed guitar. It had a Sho-Bud knee lever on it, one of those tear drops. And I played it for quite a while. Until they sent me a brown one, a rosewood, to the Hee Haw set. I wish I still had that black guitar today. Nobody has ever known what happened to it. I gave it back to the Emmons factory and it disappeared.

JIM- Yeah, when you get older you try to get back those things that made an impression on you.

JD- Yeah, of course you do. I'll do that, probably, the rest of my life.

JIM- One thing we haven't covered, you're copedent, you're not really Day or Emmons, just kinda backwards.

JD- I know. There's a story behind that. When I first met Lloyd Green he had come to LA to play with Charlie Pride, on the Lawrence Welk Show. I met him in his hotel room, and he played some stuff for me. His knee lever raising the E's was on the left knee, going right.

JIM- And you're talking Emmons style on the pedals?

JD- Yeah. You see Lloyd was the first guy to put that on the guitar. I thought that seemed like a good place to put it, so when I ordered my first brown guitar that they gave me, that's how I had it setup. I said, do it like Lloyd does his. Of course Lloyd didn't play Emmons, but that's how

that came to be. And I really regret that sometimes. But it's the way I learned to play so it's too late to change.

JIM- Bet it keeps your ankle loose.

JD- Yeah. It's not a hard thing to do. I had another Emmons built. I had Mike Cass build it up where it's standard. Everything's Emmons set up, 3 pedals, raise E's to the left, lower to the right. And I found myself looking for things that I'd been playing all my life. All of a sudden I had to think about it. And I decided it wasn't worth that. It's almost like learning to play all over again, so I didn't do it.

JIM- Did it create anything new?

JD- Ah, no. Maybe I didn't stay with it long enough. But what it did do was, when I went back to my regular setup then I was a little bumfuzzled by that, cause you know, your mind wants to switch. But then it's too late, I don't want to change. It's made me where I can't go in to sit down at somebody else's guitar and sit in an play. I really regret that.

JIM- Your ten strings on E9th are exactly like everybody else's?

JD- Yeah.

JIM- But one time they were on the bottom? I remember reading sometime that you first started of with your chromatic's on the bottom.

JD- Well, that's what Emmons did when he first started. And I think Buddy Charlton has his chromatics on the bottom, below the B string. Then everything was moved up. And when I got that that black Emmons guitar, if I'm not mistaken, it was setup like that.

JIM- When did you go about changing those?

JD- When I found out that most guys had them on the top. I evolved the long way around.

JIM Well, let's just go down to your knee levers, starting over on the left left.

JD- I lower 4 and 8, left > left, I raise 4 and 8, left > right, then right > left I lower the second string a whole and a half, and lower the 9th a half. Right > right, I raise 1 and 7 a whole tone, and lower the third string on the 6th neck. That's the ones I use the most. I don't have a riser on the left knee.

JIM- You don't have a verticle?

JD- I don't have a verticle, not on the Emmons guitars. I use those four and all three floor pedals. Always.

JIM- You have just the 3 floor pedals? Are they standard ABC?

JD- Yeah.

JIM- So your C is raising the 4 and 5?

JD- Yeah. And I don't lower the B strings at all.

JIM- I lower my sixth down. Do you have that on yours?

JD- I don't lower the sixth. I'm gonna have that on this new guitar.

JIM- You ordered yourself a new guitar?

JD- Well, I ordered it on trial, a JCH. And I've got it loaded down.

JIM- Oh, I just assumed they were putting a cluster on yours.

JD- No. When he first started that company, years ago, he needed some money, he still needs money. But I said, Jimmy, I've got two hundred bucks that I'm gonna send you. If that helps put in in the bank. So he took it and he's never forgotten that. He wrote the order form for my first brown Emmons. I still have it. He wrote all the way down the page, ran out of space, and started writing up the side. I still have that at home. He's been a friend since 1969. Every two or three years he calls and says, "Hey, you want to try one of these guitars?" I say, no Jim, I'm happy. I've got these Emmons, they sound great to me, that's what I'm doing. Now, since Paul has changed everybody's mind, and everybody wants to lower 5 and 6, I tried in on a couple of LeGrandes. They didn't work, it didn't sound right, the guitars weren't what I was looking for. So, I played all those steels at Scottie's show, and I played Jimmy's personal guitar, which was several years old. And something clicked there, I heard something I hadn't heard in any other guitar. So I said "Jimmy, here's the deal. If you will let me try one of these guitars, before I pay you for it, and I like it, I'll buy it. But if I don't like it I'll just give it back." He said, "Well, I don't do that very often, but for you I will." So it's been a year, and I'm still working on it. But it's coming together.

JIM- So this is where you added some of your new Reese changes on the 6th neck in there?

JD- Yes. On the fourth pedal, to the sixth, and I'm gonna lower 5 and 6 on the ninth. I've got the thing loaded down. It's got 8 and 10.

JIM- Are you gonna raise 2?

JD- I'm gonna raise 2.

JIM- With your F#>G#?

JD- Yeah. But I've got it changed. Instead of it being on the right >right I've got it on the left going right on a cluster. Cause I needed the right >right to lower the sixth. So, it's gonna be different. But Jimmy has that left going right that raises his F#'s, and I've tried it, and it seems like it may work. But the good thing about it is if I don't like it I can change it. So, I've got 8 and 10 on that guitar. Eight floors and 10 knee levers.

JIM- You're gonna have to learn how to squirm on the seat, aren't you?

JD- Yeah. But I wanted to put 11. I'm lowering the 5th string by going in left> left. Just pushing in a little bit and lowering the 5th and I'll lower the 6 out here. But I wanted all the hardware on there in case I wanted to change stuff around. Then I'll have the levers hanging there. He's gonna do it; I wanted to go 11 levers but he wouldn't do it.

JIM- So what was your 11th one going to do?

JD- Well, I'm lowering the fifth string a whole tone on the C6, and I wanted to lower the sixth a whole tone.

JIM- Whoa. Run that by me again.

JD- 5th and 6th on the C neck, I want to lower those a whole tone. But separate That's why I needed that extra lever.

JIM- I gotta stop and think a minute. On your guitar - on a standard 10 string - that is 5th and 6th would be an A and a G?

JD- Yeah. A to G and G to F.

JIM- What's it do for you?

JD- Well, a lot of times when you're playing a single note you don't have to go down a whole step with your bar that last note is laying there for you. And if you lower those two together it acts the very same way as lowering 5 and 6 on the ninth. It gives you like a 5 chord. I talked to Paul about this years ago and he told me to use that. I have that on one of my steels. So when I get that guitar, if everything else works right I'll figure a way to lower that 6th. So, it's gonna be a little different.

JIM- That little ?? third two should be handled here on the.....????

JD- If I have to, I'll use an elbow or something. So that's the deal - I'm hoping the guitar sounds the way I want it. I played it but there were no pedals on it. It sounded pretty decent.

JIM- Well, you about ready to get something to eat?

-the end-