

Kevin Welch – Bio

Kevin Welch was born in Long Beach, California on 17th August 1955. In 1996 Kevin told me that being born in California was a coincidence, *"My parents lived there for a brief time. I think we were probably gone by the time I was eight months old. We travelled, sometimes every week. We lived in one place for a whole year. We probably lived in sixty or seventy places by the time I was seven. My father was a civilian, and did technical work for the military. He had a crew of guys, and their families, and we travelled caravan style from town to town."* At the age of seven, Kevin's parents settled in Midwest City, Oklahoma. As for musicians in the family, Kevin never did meet his paternal grandmother, but she had been a classical pianist during her early life. Shortly before moving to Oklahoma, the Welch's lived in Pennsylvania. One day, Kevin's mother brought home an Elvis Presley album and the youngster soon decided that he was going to become a musician. Having taken music lessons, on the accordion, in Pennsylvania, when his family moved south Welch found a new teacher, Ray Norman, and continued taking accordion lessons till he was ten. Kevin then picked up the guitar and soon afterwards formed his first garage band. Welch's first paying gig came at the age of fourteen. Three years later Kevin had an epiphany. *"I discovered old bluegrass music - old blues music - roots stuff. Old country music. I didn't care much for contemporary country music at the time."* Aged seventeen and a music major, Kevin attended Central State College [now the University of Central Oklahoma] in Edmond, Oklahoma for one semester. Retaining a base in Midwest City until the age of twenty-one, Welch toured relentlessly as a member of the band's, New Rodeo and Blue Rose Café. *"Our boundaries were from the Grand Canyon in Arizona, to New Orleans. Sort of an oval shape between those two points. We played in Texas a bit, New Mexico and Colorado, a whole lot. Oklahoma and Kansas. Arkansas quite a bit."* Although Capitol Records showed some interest in Blue Rose Café, the band split up in 1976. Kevin and Pat Long from Blue Rose Café continued working as a duo for a while. By 1978 Welch decided there must be some other way of making a living, and newly married, he moved to Nashville where he began writing songs for the publisher, Tree International. Early on, Roger Miller cut Kevin's "Everyone Gets Crazy Now and Then" but it wasn't until Gary Morris recorded "Velvet Chains" in 1982 that Kevin scored his first chart song. It reached the US Country Top 10 that November. By the mid-eighties Welch was beginning to feel more financially secure and it was during this period that he began collaborating with *hit* writer, Gary Nicholson. A few years later, Welch began yearning to play in a live situation once more. He recalled *"It partially happened because Kieran [Kane] and Jamie [O'Hara] formed The O'Kanes. I really loved them. By then, Nicholson and myself, Mike Henderson, Harry Stinson and Glen Worf had a band called The Roosters - oh, and a guy named Wally Wilson. That was a real fun band and I kind of started diggin' it again. We performed mostly around Nashville."* Chuck Morris, who managed the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band told Kevin, *"You need to make a record."* Paul Worley, the noted album producer, was saying the same thing. Paul and Chuck were good friends and finally Kevin agreed with them. The pair approached Warner Bros. and secured a deal for Welch, and he went on to make two records for the label, **"Kevin Welch"** and **"Western Beat."** Although they asked Kevin to record a third album, in the end Warner Bros. released him from his contract – *no strings attached*. January 1st 1995 marked the official launch of the Dead Reckoning label. Kieran Kane had hatched the plan, and being a keen sailor thought up the label name. The initial *crew* consisted of Kane, Welch, Harry Stinson, Mike Henderson and Tammy Rogers. To date Welch has released three solo albums on the imprint, albeit that the most recent release **"Millionaire"** marked the beginning of a partnership with Compendia. Supported by a quartet, appropriately named Danes, the album was recorded in Denmark and Nashville. The Dead Reckoners consisting of Henderson, Welch, Kane and Rogers aided by Harry Stinson (drums), Alison Prestwood (bass) and Fats Kaplin (fiddle, accordion) released a live album titled **"A Night of Reckoning"** in 1997. Kane and Welch cut a live *duo* album while touring Australian tour in November 1999.

Through the early years of the 21st century Welch has regularly toured Australia and accompanied by The Flood, the in-concert album **"Live Down Here On Earth"** was recorded *down under* during 2003. A DVD release **"Plenty Of Time"** followed in 2004. In late July 2004, Compass Records released the Kane and Welch, *with Fats Kaplin*, studio recording **"You Can't Save Everybody,"** and two years later the same aggregation of players, on the same record label, released **"Lost John Dean."** Billed as a trio, Compass Records issued **"Kane Welch Kaplin"** during mid September 2007.

Discography : **"Kevin Welch"** [1990] ; **"Western Beat"** [1992] ; **"Life Down Here On Earth"** [1995] ; **"Beneath My Wheels"** [1999] ; **"Millionaire"** with The Danes [2001/2002] ; **"Live Down Here On Earth"** with The Flood [2003] :

Miscellaneous **"A Night Of Reckoning"** with The Dead Reckoners [1997] ;

with Kieran Kane : **“11/12/13 – Live in Melbourne”** [2000] ; **“You Can’t Save Everybody”** [2004] ;
“Lost John Dean” [2006] ; **“Kane Welch Kaplin”** [2007] :
DVD : **“Plenty Of Time”** with The Flood [2004] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 09/02, 07/04, 04/06 and 09/07.

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