

**Oral History Interview of
Noe Hernandez**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
October 28, 2016
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Crossroads of Music Archive***

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Preferred Citation for this Document:

Hernandez, Noe Oral History Interview, October 28, 2016. Interview by Daniel Sanchez, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

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Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 96kHz/24bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Related Interviews:

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: Daniel Sanchez

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Ian Fehl

Editor(s): Kayci Rush

Interview Series Background:

The Crossroads Artists Project encompasses interviews conducted by the Crossroads of Music Archive Staff members. They hope to document the creative process of artists and songwriters from all across the Southwestern United States.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Noe Hernandez who describes how he got involved with music at an early age and how he entered the Lubbock music scene.

Length of Interview: 01:14:41

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Keywords

Rock and roll, Musicians, West Texas music

Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Sanchez. Today's date is October the 28, 2016. We're in the offices of Noe Hernandez. Noe's a local musician. I say local, he's really a transplant from South Texas. Noe, thank you for being here.

Noe Hernandez (NH):

No problem, my pleasure.

DS:

Actually, I'm here. I'm at your house. [laugh] Would you please start off by telling us your complete legal name.

NH:

Legal name is Noe Bernardo Hernandez.

DS:

Could you spell Bernardo?

NH:

B-e-r-n-a-r-d-o.

DS:

When and where were you born?

NH:

I was born in Brownsville, Texas in 1955; December sixteenth.

DS:

Could you give us the same information on your parents?

NH:

My parents were born in Brownsville, Texas as well. They had me when they were twenty-two years old. I know that much.

DS:

They were young, huh?

NH:

[laugh] Yeah.

DS:

Are you the oldest?

NH:

I was—I'm the oldest, yes.

DS:

What's your dad's name?

NH:

Joe, Jose. My mom's name is Teresa.

DS:

Teresa. What were their backgrounds?

NH:

Well, their backgrounds is—they were just simple folks. They worked hard. Both of them worked. In those days it's kind of rare. When we were kids both of them worked, but they both had to work. They always had somebody that they hired to take care of us when we were kids. Their parents were born in Mexico, but I can't tell you which ones were born there in Mexico, and they migrated this way.

DS:

You're a musician. Were your parents musicians or anybody else in the family?

NH:

No, they were not. My brothers tried to be, but it didn't work out for them. I don't guess they didn't had the rhythm for it. [laugh]

DS:

These were younger brothers?

NH:

Yes, younger brothers. It was first me, and then Orlando, and Rene, and then it was my sisters Belinda, Yolanda and Leticia.

DS:

Oh, okay. Pretty big family there.

NH:

Yeah, they had six kids.

DS:

Six kids. What was it like growing up there in Brownsville?

NH:

Brownsville was a whole lot different than here. Of , the weather was hot and humid, and it was mostly Hispanic over there; I would say eighty percent. All of the politicians, bankers, and everybody in high places was pretty much Hispanic. It was tropical weather over there. Of course, we went through all of the hurricanes and stuff like that. I think I've been through six while I was down there. The people are friendly, and most of the time they speak Spanish even though in school—even in schools, they actually had classes for only Spanish speaking kids, which I never really understood that because my parents only spoke Spanish, and all of the neighborhood kids and—so that's all I knew. We didn't have a TV when I was young to hear English that much. We got one kind of late. So, when I was first started school, I wasn't in that class. I was English speaking ,so I learned how to speak English, so I never did understand that. Why not teach English? That's the language of the United States. Anyway, that's—it was kind of different. Then we had a bunch of—while I was in school we had migrants, which they were there seasonal. They were there for school a little bit, then the whole family just kind of migrated North to harvest some kind of product. That's the way it was growing up. It's about a hundred—it was about a hundred and twenty-five thousand people, the city. That's kind of like it was.

DS:

You mentioned that others would move off ,so your family was stable and stayed there?

NH:

Yes, they've been there all—they're still there.

DS:

What was it that your dad did for a living?

NH:

He did many things—well, the two main things he did was—he was a worker at the mercy hospital. He was just like a maintenance person there, and he worked in the kitchen as well; like as a cook. So he did two things there that I know of. My mom was an assistant, like a nurse assistant, at a retirement home—as far as I can remember, their first jobs. She also worked at that hospital for a little bit, also as an assistant to nurses; a nurse's assistant. I think that's what you call it. I can't really remember but that's what she did, and that was her job duties. Then she stayed in that same field and my dad didn't. He went to work at an assembly line for Continental

Trailways. They were building—they were hiring. Then, I believe that was the last job that he had before he retired.

DS:

So he got there and stayed there, huh?

NH:

Pretty much.

DS:

Having that stable background, I guess, they were trying to push y'all towards education and—

NH:

Yes, yes, they definitely did. We—not all of us went to college, but I did and my brother did, Orlando and Rene; they went to college. My sisters did not, but they pushed it though.

DS:

How did you get the music bug?

NH:

Well, it was in the 1960s. My parents had a radio but they always listened to Spanish music. I didn't care for it. We just heard it in the kitchen, kitchen radio. I didn't care for. It just didn't strike me as something I would want to do. Then in 1966, '67, something like that, I found a radio station, the only one that I knew of, and it wasn't even local, it was from McAllen, Texas; a ways off but we could get the reception. I started listening to Tommy James and The Shondells, The Beatles, and stuff like that. That really kind of struck a note with me, I started—and I liked it. So then my neighbor, he's older than me, he actually had a band and they used to rehearse right next door at a mobile home, so I used to hear them rehearse—he was the drummer. I would want to—I would say that he was my inspiration as far as wanting to become a drummer. Just hearing him play, I thought it was just fascinating. Then he invited me—he always saw me right there in the window and say, "Hey, you, come in if you want to." So I walked in and I saw him playing it, and I was amazed by the—all four limbs going at the same time; both hands and both feet. I said, "Wow. How do you do that?" I was kind of amazed by it. Then putting it all together with the music that I started listening to on the radio, and then what they played in his band, they were copying that music, I said, "Wow, they did it just like the radio." That's what fascinated me, and I think that's how I just got the bug. I haven't looked back ever since.

DS:

What was his name?

NH:

Robert Silva. He still lives there, by the way. I just went on vacation, and I didn't see him but my mom said that he's the only one living at that house. His parents and everybody left.

DS:

So he still lives in the same house, huh?

NH:

Same, by himself. Uh-huh. As far as I know he still plays the drums. He's about close to seventy. That was my inspiration.

DS:

When was the first time you actually picked up some drumsticks and sat down?

NH:

Well, it was in the seventies when I was in high school. I finally—I wanted to that. I knew I wanted to. I met a guy, his name was Rick Peña, and he was a guitar player, and he loved The Beatles and—anyway we met because we were in band in high school. He was a year ahead of me but anyway, he made it known that he's a musician and wants to start something, so I said, "Yeah, I'd like to do that," not knowing anything. I really didn't know how to play. I didn't have a drum set. We finally got together and—him and he found a bass player, his name was Danny De La Rosa. We got together at my house, and it was very raw. We had never been together in a band together before, neither one of us. I actually used a snare drum that my mom had bought me for the band, and I used to floor as a bass drum. I was just kind of stomping on the floor. I didn't really know how to—the coordination for as far as a set goes, but I could kind of just do the bass drum and snare. I could just kind of hear it and I would mimic it. That was my start, actually. I kept on going, and the guys didn't fire me just because I didn't have a drum set so, "It sounds close enough. I think he's doing pretty good." I guess they thought I was okay. I finally—I think my parents finally saw that I had that fever for that and I wasn't going to stop. So either they felt sorry for me and they said, "Well, we'll buy you a drum set." Of course, I was asking for one as well, but they never did buy me one because we were poor. We grew up poor, and they just—whatever they made was already budgeted for the household. We found one, and it was a hundred dollars and it wasn't the best drum set in the world, but to me it was. Then when I got it, I actually had all the pieces that I needed, and I started just practicing on the coordination just by ear. I could hear what the songs were doing on the radio, so I just had to put it together for my body to follow that. I couldn't do it at first, it was too hard, but I guess my drive was just 200 percent then I said, "Well, I'm not quitting." Just naturally I wanted to learn that. Until you just give it enough time, and my coordination started forming, structuring in the way I wanted it. I said, "Finally, I can do this." I was pretty proud of myself because nobody really taught me, I

just kind of taught myself. I did go and watch my neighbor play, just kind of what he does. I just kind of looked, and looked, and then I put it together, that was it. Finally I got a drum set and that band continued. Then we lost that bass player, Danny, when we—then we got another guy, Robert Chavez. We had just a trio and that's how we started. We actually—

DS:

When did y'all first start playing?

NH:

Nineteen seventy-three.

DS:

When was the first gig?

NH:

I want to say it was a high school—well, no it wasn't. It was just a private party, called them get-togethers back in the day. We played for free. I said, "It was just a party. We'll bring all of our instruments and we'll just play." That was kind of our first gig, just free. Then we had a rehearsal place, like out in the country, and we would invite people just to come on over. "Just come on over. We're going to have a party here and we're going to play." Finally we got known. We stuck together through high school, and I think our first professional gig was the high school dance. It wasn't even our high school, it was somewhere like La Feria or something like that. I forgot the town but it wasn't there. We had to go on the back of a pickup truck.

DS:

I was going to ask, "How'd you get there?"

NH:

All of us with all of our instruments were on the back of a pickup truck. I know I rode in the back with the drums. I wanted to make sure they didn't fly away. That's, as far as I remember, I believe that's the first gig that we had.

DS:

What did your parents think when you started to venture out and play music?

NH:

I don't suppose they actually pushed me to do that. They were—I think they were more like, "You're not going to do anything with that." It was just for fun; like a toy, so to speak. I think they—when they saw that I was actually making money, I think that they didn't say anything anymore. They didn't say, "Go for it. Let's help you do this or this and that." They just didn't

say anything. The only thing I heard them say a lot was, "Keep it down." [laugh] I practiced at home all of the time, I would say six hours a day if I could.

DS:

So you were doing this all through high school?

NH:

Through high school, yes. That's really mostly what I heard from them was, "Keep it down." They didn't really push me too much, but nowadays they know what I'm doing; I play and I have played with a band. They ask me, "Are you still playing in a band?" I said, "Yeah, I still am." They said, "Okay, good." I think by now they're convinced that I actually did something with it. I'm not a national act or anything like that but we've been pretty successful. We stay busy, especially with this band. It's the longest one that I've ever been with.

DS:

I unfortunately have never gone to listen to it but I know it's been around forever because you would always hear the ads that—you're always busy, you're always playing.

NH:

We were pretty busy. I would say three times a month we play; weekends. We only do weekends because all of us have jobs.

DS:

You were talking about you were playing in high school, and then you had mentioned college. When did you decide you were going to college and were did you—

NH:

College, it was right after high school, actually, but I got married. I got married so I quit college. As far as college goes, I was intermittent with it. Then I started again in 1980 over there at Texas Southmost, which is now UT Brownsville. Went two years there then I moved to San Antonio, and I wanted to continue college so—but we had a snag there. My wife, this was my second wife, we—her grandad was getting sick so we were the closest ones to take care of him, so we moved to Abilene. In Abilene, I stayed there about five years to kind of take care of him but he—then we decided—well I wanted to continue college, so that's how I wound up here in Lubbock. I said, "I don't want to go to Abilene, they're too expensive there," so I came here to Lubbock. That's the reason I wound up in Lubbock, to go to Texas Tech. It was either San Antonio or here but this place was closer, so that's how I wound up here. I didn't intend on staying here, but here I am twenty-six years later.

DS:

Let's talk about that along the way. You mentioned San Antonio and Abilene; were you also playing music there, while you were there?

NH:

In Abilene I was. I was in two bands there. One was a rock band and one was a country—three bands, I'm sorry. I forgot about the other one. Two were rock bands, just basic classic rock, and one was a country band during that duration; that was five years. As far as bands that I've been in since I've started, I would say like twenty.

DS:

Can you give us a couple of the names?

NH:

I don't even remember the names. I think they first band was Ricky and Them. Ricky was the guitar player. Then another band called Lambert, there in Brownsville. Orange Crush was another one. Actually, I don't even remember the other bands. They were short-lived. It just wasn't the right combination. Anyway, Abilene was—Southern Cross, Rolling Thunder and—oh, there was another one called Race and the country band I forgot. There were already established, I wasn't like a founding member of these bands, so I just kind of joined. I forgot the country band. Anyway, that's to name a few.

DS:

A lot of these local bands, they go through generations of musicians sometimes, and it seems like they just are changing people

NH:

Yeah, a lot of them. That seems to be the problem. It's not the music part, they can probably put everything together, but lots of times the short-lived bands is because personality problems, and stuff like that.

DS:

In like you're case, you're there but you're coming now to Lubbock to go to school, to go to Tech.

NH:

Right. Uh-huh. Here—I've been in a few bands here as well. Country is not really my preference because I like to play the drums, and I don't do much in country; it's just kind of a background, just keep a beat pretty much. Classic rock and stuff like that, it's more diversified. The beats are different and stuff like that, so I enjoyed it more. I get to do more. It's more challenging

DS:

You get to do the occasional solo too, right?

NH:

Yeah, sometimes. I don't do them very much. I used to but not anymore.

DS:

You mentioned that you had moved to Lubbock. How old were you when you came to Lubbock?

NH:

When I came to Lubbock it was 1989, that summer, August. How old was I? Good question. I got to think about this one. I was born in '55, '65, '75, '85—thirty-three.

DS:

Thirty-three, wow. Thirty-three, you're married and you're coming to school?

NH:

Yes, I was married.

DS:

Were you coming as a—

NH:

I was married, had two kids with that wife, and those were my last kids that I had. They came here and they went to school in Lubbock and all of that, but no one's around anymore, they're all gone.

DS:

Were you working while you were going to school also?

NH:

Yes, I was also working, fitting it in; work and went to school when I could, even during lunch sometimes.

DS:

Where were you working at?

NH:

It was a Coca-Cola company. It was an affiliate of Coca-Cola but it was a food and beverage company. Back then it was called, let me see, Refreshment Vending. I think so. Anyway, I did that for many years actually. Then until they decided that they grew—and then they decided that they were restructured, so I actually got laid off after some many, many years. It's a typical thing that companies are doing nowadays; get rid of the ones that cost us more, and get more people in that are going to cost us less. They did that everybody, not just me. Everybody that had tenure there, they did that, but it was a good thing because I'd started doing this, and this is a lot more enjoyable. This is what I do now. I just do real estate, help people buy or sell homes, and I'm a musician, and I don't plan on quitting any time soon.

DS:

How soon after you came to Lubbock did you start playing in a band here?

NH:

It was probably about two years. That's when I started that country band, Renegade. Actually, I didn't start it. They were auditioning drummers, and I got picked. We had—

DS:

What made you decide to go audition?

NH:

Because, like you mentioned earlier, I still had the bug, or the fever, for it and I said, "Well, it's been a while since I've done this." I've been intermittent with it as well, but most of the time I've been playing, doing something. Some guys just play golf and I play the drums, pretty much. It's still not out of my system, and it wasn't then either. I just felt ready, like I wanted to do something, and that's all I could find actually. Not my preference but I said, "Well, I'll do country, just to stay busy because I enjoy it," and to this day I still enjoy it or I wouldn't be doing it. I'm sixty years old. I didn't ever saw myself, when I was in my twenties, doing this at sixty, not even fifty. Especially like a classic rock band. I thought maybe a little orchestra or something like that—especially a classic rock band. Still got the bug, and it just hasn't left so I guess whenever that happens, like I don't feel it anymore.

DS:

How long were you with Renegade?

NH:

Five years. I think it's five years.

DS:

And after that is that when you—

NH:

We had another country band; Johnny Overdrive and the Sprockets, that was the name of the band. Sounds like a rock band really, but it was a country band, and that was another two years I believe.

DS:

How did Kinky Wizards begin?

NH:

The Kinky Wizards was—we started in about 2000. Marty, which is the guitar player; he was actually in the band that I was in, Johnny and the Sprockets. He was the guitar player for them—anyway, we had met before that but then I got in a band with that band, they hired me. So anyway, he—since we broke up with them, he actually had another project going. I think the name of the band was called The Speedbumps. I always told him, “Hey,”—he asked for advice a lot—I said, “You think I ought to join them?” He said, “Yeah, join them. You never know what’s going to come out of it,” so he did. It was short-lived, not very long. I actually ran sound for him one time. Anyway, he was doing that so he kept on playing and then they broke up. They had a rehearsal place, and since he wasn’t doing anything anymore, he still had the rehearsal place, he just happened to talk to me or saw me somewhere and said, “Hey, I got equipment there at the place. Why don’t we just get together on Saturday and just kind of play a little bit?” I wasn’t doing anything at the time so I agreed. “Well, okay I’ll do it. I’ll do something.” So we got together one Saturday or something like that and we just started playing, I can’t remember what; just something—“You know this,” and “You know that,” and I said, “Yeah, let’s do it. Whatever comes out, just play.” That was fun. I enjoyed doing it; just whatever comes out, just kind of improvising. Then we got together again and then he happened—he, Marty, happened to see the guitar player, the original guitar player that was with Renegade, the years back. His name is Rick and—but anyway, Marty started talking to him and they just talked, “Hey, yeah, me and Noe,”—which he knew me, we all knew each other—said, “Yeah, we got together on a Saturday but we didn’t have a bass player. We don’t have a bass player, so I wish we could find one.” I really don’t know what the conversation was but it’s something to that effect. Rick said, “Well, I can play bass,” so he kind of switched over from guitar to bass. He said, “Yeah, just come on by and let’s just get together and see what happens.” That’s kind of how we started. Marty actually had—I think he had plans to continue that other band that broke up that he was with, The Speedbumps, but I’m not sure if he wanted to do that with us or just messing around at the time, but that’s beginnings of the Kinky Wizards. We just kind of—we had fun doing it, and we did it more often, and then we got another guitar player, actually. His name was Phil—to actually join in and he was—he decided that, “Yeah, I’ll go get together with you guys.” So that’s—we just

started doing it and kind of—we started learning more material, and never stopped. We just kept going and then—we didn't have a name for the band.

DS:

I was going to ask, at that time did y'all decide to have a name?

NH:

We didn't have a name for it, we just got together and we decided, "You know what, we can actually go play out now if we want to. We have enough in our repertoire to go out and do something." I said, "Well, need a name." We didn't know what to name it. We called off a hundred names and never could agree on one. Then we just kind of put it off and they said, "Hey, we got—somebody wants us to play at a party,"—it was a house party but they were going to pay us—"We need a name, what are we going to use?" One of the—the bass player's son—he had some friends that they hung out with they say, "We need a name," so they're actually the ones that came up with the name, not us. I wasn't crazy about it but I said, "Well, we need a name. We need a name," so they came up with the Kinky Wizards. I said, "Okay, that's kind of catchy. I'm not sure if that's a good name but it's kind of catchy so let's just go—let's just use that. We can change it later." So we did that, and later on we found out that "Kinky Wizards" is actually a fictional band that came out in the movie *High Fidelity*. It's true. I looked at the movie and said, "Wow, Kinky Wizards." Anyway, we were just too lazy to find another name so we just kept the Kinky Wizards and that's—the rest history. We just stayed with that name. That's actually how we started and—

DS:

Did y'all have immediate success?

NH:

With what?

DS:

Going out and playing with that name. Did people enjoy it?

NH:

Yes, we did actually. Marty, which he had the most drive out of anybody back in the day—he actually—we started getting more popular, played more parties and stuff like that, so we wanted to go out and play out in public, professionally. We went out to the sports grills, stuff like that, posted flyers, "Hey, we'll play for this, play for that." They decided, "Yeah, we'll put you guys in here." I guess they liked us because it got to a point where they were just calling us, "Hey, can you do this date and this date and that date," and that's how we grew. Our philosophy, as far as the music that we do, is, "Let's do something that's popular, that people want to hear. That the

masses want to hear,” so we played a lot of popular material out there. As a matter of fact, to this day, we still do songs that we learned sixteen years ago. We’re kind of tired of them but we still do them because, believe it or not, we’ve gone different phases of audiences, but they still want to hear those songs so I said, “Okay, they never get tired of those songs but we do.”

DS:

Name those standards that they like.

NH:

Like, Jessie’s Girl. They still want to hear that. They still want to hear Sweet Child of Mine, that’s a favorite. They want to hear Free Bird; Lynyrd Skynyrd. They just never die, never die. The Bee Gees, they want to hear the Bee Gees. That’s some of the stuff that we do. We kind of—we’re flexible with it as far as music goes. We do country and, like, Neon Moon; Brooks and Dunn. People still love that song even though it’s an old song. We do some Zeppelin, the classic Led Zeppelin, and Ozzy Osbourne; stuff like that, like Crazy Train. People still love that song. We’ve done it since we started. Those songs just never die, they’re so popular. We continue to do that so—I think—I believe that’s what the owners of these places like. We satisfy the crowd and they stay there. It’s better on them and it’s better for us too. We like to play to people, not run everybody out. It’s more fun to us and the night goes by faster. There’s even some nights when we’re having so much fun and the people are, that we don’t even want to quit. We go till two o’clock in the morning and the owners tell them, “Hey, we got to go.” There’s nights like that. I give credit to that. I think we just—the popularity of the material that we do, and we try to learn something like every week, something new. We do learn it. We learn many, many songs but if they don’t really go over that well, we don’t get much response to it, we just drop it, and go on to the next one to where it’s received well by audience. That’s been our formula as we go, “Let’s do something different. Let’s do Queen. Let’s do from this extreme to the other extreme.”

DS:

Let’s talk about something new you tried to incorporate that succeeded and something that didn’t.

NH:

Something that didn’t? Well, let’s see. Something like—I can’t remember—say like Journey, everybody likes Journey. We did one called *Separate Ways*, and it’s a great song, and we did it well, and it just wasn’t received that well, so we don’t do that anymore. The one song that everybody loves by Journey is *Don’t Stop Believin’*. To this day people love that song. That’s one example of it. “Okay, we did the effort on this one song but it’s not doing anything for us, so let’s drop it.” We did The Beatles, like *Hard Day’s Night* and *Eight Days a Week* and we gave it a chance. We’d play it at different places but it just wasn’t doing anything. People were not that

crazy about it, so we drop those and go on. We learned other Beatles material and it seems to be going a lot better, like, for instance, *Lucy and the Skies with Diamonds*. Everybody seems to sing along to it. I think that did better than the others. That's an example of what we do. I would say we've learned over four-hundred, five-hundred songs and dropped many. We only do forty a night.

DS:

Only forty a night?

NH:

Yes, but we have a—

DS:

What's your current playlist?

NH:

A hundred and fifty to one seventy-five. We do that and if we played two nights in one place, which we do, you'll hear different stuff each night. We have that many that we can just, kind of, pick and choose, "Okay, let's do something different. Let's do this."

DS:

And that's to keep yourself interest too, right?

NH:

That's exactly right, actually. We say, "We don't have to do the same thing we did last night. Let's do this set over here." We can play around with it, and we make up a new set list every time we play. We try to stick with it. Sometimes it seems like people are not, kind of, there so I say, "Let's change it a little bit. Let's do this, let's do that." We don't keep to it every time.

DS:

Do you do that—like if you're at a venue and you notice that particular night that's not working, do you find a genre that they'd prefer?

NH:

Yeah, sometimes we ask them. Sometimes we just get a rapport of the audience; we kind of include them. "Hey, all right, we want to get you guys here on the dance floor. What do y'all want to hear?" Sometimes we get ideas from them and say, "Okay, you're the one that requested this so you're going to be the first one on the dance floor," [laughter] so we kind of hold them to it. Say, "Come on, it's your time to shine." We have fun with the audience, too.

DS:

What are some of your favorite venues here in town?

NH:

I would want to say it's the Texas Café, and The Office, and Buffalo Wild Wings, and we do the O-Bar [Oyster Bar] on 34th street. That's mainly where we play, mainly because that's our favorite places. There's other venues like from Texas Tech but the music that we do now doesn't relate with the kids, and that's mostly what goes there. It just doesn't relate with them anymore. It used to when we first started fourteen years ago. We used to have every Tech kid in the gigs. It was one in, one out at a place called Bleachers. I don't know if you've ever heard of that.

DS:

Oh, yeah, downtown. In the depot district.

NH:

They were just lined up and when somebody went out—because that's all the capacity—but they've gone their own way. They listen to—I don't know what they listen to now but not the stuff that we do, so our audience is a little more mature nowadays, so we do a lot of classic stuff.

DS:

Do you have like a set group of people that you—when you're performing somewhere, that you're probably going to see them there listening?

NH:

Yes, we have like a fan base. Of course, they're mature, so some of them have kids and stuff like that so we don't see them all the time. They have their own lives, they can't be at these places every night but yes, to answer your question. We see familiar faces all the time.

DS:

I imagine your band is kind of like—you mentioned Junior Roscas [00:36:26] and he's that same way; those people that—if he's playing somewhere, they're going to go listen to him because he's an extended part of their family.

NH:

Yes, yes. We have that too. I'm sure everybody that's been a while have their own fan base, and we appreciate them. We want to make them a part of us too as well. We take pictures of them and stuff, and put them on our website, stuff like that. Sometimes we learn stuff that they request. I say, "Okay, we'll learn it." Like—it didn't go over too well, but we learned it. One of them, one girl was asking for *Carry On My Wayward Son* and I said, "Well, that'll be a fun song to play," and it is, but we played it, and played it, and played it, and it didn't seem to have that

great of a response so we haven't played it very much lately. We do that sometimes; we listen to our fans and say, "Okay, we'll do this for you. Why not?" It's something different for us. I like it because it's refreshing, it's a new song. I always want to learn new songs. I always do—sometimes we don't do it fast enough for me but, hey, it's okay.

DS:

Have y'all put any recordings together?

NH:

Yes, we have a CD, we don't have anymore, but we sold them all and then—this was—we took a few months off, I think like five months, something like that, or four months, and we recorded it. It was all done in a home studio, and we recorded it. It was just ideas that we all had. Each one of us had a little input on the production of it. Sometimes we listen back to it, like I do, and I say, "I like this part. I like that, but I wish we left that part out or this part out." [laughter] We're real critical of it, I think.

DS:

Well, when you have so many songs, how did you decide what was going to go on—

NH:

Well, we just kind of—we just decided what we mostly liked; how, "I liked that part, I liked that riff that you're doing. Let's put that together and—" of course, for me, I'm just kind of the rhythm section so I just kind of fit it into what the guitar players had in mind. That was my job in it. I sang in some songs as well. One song I created mostly myself, one of them in there—the other ones was done by the guitar players, pretty much. I don't know if we'll do that again. In Lubbock, it seems to be like—seems to me—I'm not from here so I can be objective—if it's a—like an original band with all original material, you don't get hired very much to play out. It's not very well accepted here. There's a few places that are, but as far as local bands—they bring out of town bands—but I have not seen a place with just original music.

DS:

Wow.

NH:

Surely not in the biggest places. Like Austin, you see it all the time. I have—it seems to me that people hear the majority of them like something that's familiar with them. Kind of like if you go out of town and you don't know about a restaurant, but you see a McDonald's, "Oh yeah, McDonald's. Let's go there." [laughter] You're familiar with them.

DS:

You know what you're going to get there, right?

NH:

Yeah, they can relate to it. Not that there's not people here that appreciate original material, I mean I do. You may not like all of it but the more you go see it, the more of a chance that you might see something out there or hear something out there that you really like. I don't think they have enough venues for that here.

DS:

It's kind of ironic because a lot of musicians give credit to Buddy Holly who was from Lubbock. He did play his own stuff, and then you have people like Joe "King" Carrasco, Joe Ely and all of them that did try their own original stuff but had to go, like you mentioned, Austin or in Joe Ely's case, abroad even to get—

NH:

Yeah, they didn't stay here. You had to go out there. Usually you make a name for yourself in your town, like a buzz around the town. You can do your own material then do cover tunes as well. I think you can get away with that. We did that. We did our own material and it just kind of went over their heads, "What's that?" You could see the faces in the crowd saying, "What's that?" [laughter] Then we'd play like *Sweet Child Of Mine* and they'd go, "Oh," then everybody starts screaming and shouting for something. That's kind of what I determined, "They just kind of like stuff that's popular and familiar with them."

DS:

Did any of your original material get popular? Like any of your—

NH:

No, no, it didn't. We don't do it anymore, actually. We have it there, but nobody's even asked for it. "Hey, can y'all do one of your songs," and stuff like that. Maybe in their eyes it's not that good.

DS:

That original stuff; do you have the lyrics and the score sheets and all that?

NH:

No, no. it was just all in the head. Nothing was scored or nothing like that. It was just recorded. We just—that's the way we did it. We recorded it, that's the way we all played. I can read music, drum music, but I didn't find a need for it.

DS:

Okay. The reason I was asking is because we like to have that kind of stuff in the archives too. That, photographs, so if you have some early photographs of you playing, even in South Texas, we'd be interested in having.

NH:

We do have lots of photographs actually, tons of them. I'm not sure how far back they go but I can get them for you. I can probably send them to you if you want them. But anyway, that's as far as original material, that's all we've done, pretty much.'

DS:

Did you mainly play in Lubbock or do y'all go to other cities?

NH:

Mainly in Lubbock. We have tried other cities. We've been to Midland and Odessa, and we played at a place called The Bar in Midland; Downtown Midland. Nice place. Then we played at Buffalo Wild Wings in Odessa. We did that for, I don't know, maybe a year or two, something like that, but things changed over there and we don't go anymore. We told them that we all work on Fridays—it was usually Friday and Saturdays—and sometimes we're not going to make it there by start time. They start earlier over there; at nine o'clock.

DS:

It takes you a couple hours to get there at least.

NH:

Sure enough, we didn't make it, and then they started, kind of, "Hey, when are you guys going to start," and I said "We told you from the start beginning that we might not be able to make it." They accepted it when they hired us—but anyways, so we said "You know what, it's just not worth it. It's kind of killing us, really." We get out of work Friday then hurry that way then set-up and all of that. Then we figured out, "Why are we doing this? We actually don't have to spend that much time traveling there and traveling back. As far as money goes, we're making more here, so why don't we just stick around here?" We did the same in Amarillo. We liked the places, don't get me wrong. It's different for us, it's a different crowd, and they asked us back we just—Amarillo was really hard because it was only one night, Saturday night. We didn't stay over there, we came back to Lubbock, so by the time we got here it was just too tiring for us. If I was twenty years old then no problem, but not at this age.

DS:

I understand completely.

NH:

Not at this age, it's just too much.

DS:

A couple hours there, performing, then driving back—even if you try to do it that the same night, it's a long day.

NH:

We asked—"We'll do it"—but we asked for more, and they wouldn't go for it. I said, "Well, we got to make it worth our time to do that. We're sleeping on the way back, we don't want to have an accident. Hazardous duty. We wanted more. [laugh] Anyway, they didn't go for that so we just kind of stopped doing it. We mainly stay here in Lubbock. We've been out of town but it's like, maybe, private gigs, something like that, which are a lot earlier, which we can do that. We went to Canyon not too long ago. I think it started at seven, and we were done by ten so it was plenty of time to come back. It was okay.

DS:

Typically when you perform here in town it's an evening—

NH:

It's usually from ten to two, something like that. Sometimes it's early. We do private things, like for Texas Tech we've done a few gigs for them at the Overton. The latest one was Health and Science Center, thirty-five years, I think, or something like that, anniversary. We did New Years Eve there, and stuff like that—but those are earlier. As far as the majority of them, it's usually the regular time where everybody else starts, nine to two or nine to one-thirty or ten to two, something like that.

DS:

And nine's kind of early for Lubbock. Some of the crowds are slow to get there aren't they?

NH:

Uh-huh. When we played mostly for the Texas Tech students, they didn't show up till midnight, and they can go up till four o'clock in the morning, but that's the way it was. Nowadays, pretty much about ten o'clock, they're there. There's some places where they're not as big, kind of like the Texas Café. We know it's going to be a good crowd because when we're setting up we see lots of reserved tables, and there's long strips of tables so we say, "Tonight's going to be pretty crowded," so sure enough it is and I think a lot of the people come early. I think they know that sometimes, so they want to get a seat but sometimes they don't. There's a lot of standing people and that's the way we like it. We like it just standing room only, and of course, the owners love that too.

DS:

Oh, yeah. That's why you're there, is to pack the house.

NH:

It's good for both of us.

DS:

It looks like you're still enjoying?

NH:

Yes, I still enjoy it. All four of us still are, or we wouldn't be doing it. We kind of bicker back and forth sometimes about song selections and, "No, I don't want to do that."

DS:

If you had your choice, what would you play?

NH:

My choice of music? Well, being a drummer I would probably want to play more progressive rock like Yes, and Dream Theater, and Rush, stuff like that because it kind of features the drummers, and it's a lot more challenging for me. This material that we do, like dance kind of music and stuff like that, well, I could do it with one hand behind my back pretty much. I've done it so long—but that's the majority of the songs that—popular songs, that's what they are pretty much—but it's a lot better than country. Country is like, "Okay, you don't even need a drummer, just do this and that." That would be my choice because I would actually have to sit down and put some hours in it to learn that kind of material. But, again, there is no market for that here. Actually, in a lot of places there's not. There's only a few people that like that kind of music, but for me it'd be great. If people really appreciated that music, like a ton of them, that would be great. That would be my heaven.

DS:

Let me ask you a question just from what you just said there. What do you like more, learning the music or performing it?

NH:

I like performing it. Yes, performing it is better. It's kind of like saying, "What is your favorite song? Do you have a favorite song?" I do too, say, I love hearing it, and you hear it by yourself. Say it's *Don't Stop Believin'* by Journey. I'd say, "Great song, let's put it on. Turn it up." To me it's always better—the song even sounds better if it's shared, even with one person. One person, "Oh, turn that song up," so I say, "Okay, there's two people listening and really liking this song."

When you multiply that by a lot of people, like I'm actually performing this song and a lot of people are liking that song, it just gives it more—it enhances that feeling of that song that you like. It's kind of like listening to Journey at your house, and then going to the concert. Being at the concert is different; you're there, it's live and it's just different so that performance—to me that's what it does. Practicing, yeah you can learn it and all this, and that, but that's just a back office, so to speak. It's how—where you present it that counts to me, so performing is definitely better. I don't think I would be doing this if I just learned, learned, and learned, especially at this age and never really played out to anybody. I'd say, "What am I doing this for?"

DS:

Ultimately, that's your outlet there.

NH:

Performing is definitely it for me. I think it probably is as well for the other guys. They wouldn't be doing it if they weren't doing that. That's one of the reasons in our formula. I said, "Let's perform. Let's go and let's have people that can share all of this together. Everybody's included." It creates a buzz. It's just a better buzz when that's happening. That's what they like too. The formula is, "Hey, let's please as many people as we can." Sometimes we don't even like the song. None of us like it but, you know what, the crowd sure likes it so let's just do it. We're here for them, not for us. If it was for us, we probably wouldn't be playing anywhere because I would be wanting to do progressive rock music. I said, "Nobody's going to hire us for that." Performance is it for everybody and that's—I think that's kind of why we have that formula, "Let's learn, learn, learn stuff that's popular with them and if not, let's throw it out. Let's go to the next one, see which ones are keepers for us. To perform we want places, we want people to call us back, "Hey, you guys need to perform over here." That's it for me.

DS:

We've been going probably close to an hour and I've kind of taken you all over the map. Is there something I haven't asked you about that you'd like to talk about?

NH:

Well, I didn't know what to expect really but that's pretty much me and the rest of the guys. We actually talked about the future of the Kinky Wizards. All of them have mentioned that this is what they're going to, probably, for the rest of their lives, till they cannot do it anymore. That's my vision as well. It would be very nice to continue what we got and to keep on doing it with the same guys, even though we don't agree on everything all the time. I think it beats starting over, and then finding the chemistry that we have with these four guys. The chemistry is there, obviously, after sixteen years. We do songs that we hate but we're still together because people love them. [laughter] We don't hate the songs, we did them at first but you do them so much and

you start—I don't want to say hate but—"Oh, we got to do this again." It happens with everybody. You do something so long and you say, "Ugh, I have to do this again."

DS:

Everybody likes something that's novel, so once it's old, it's old.

NH:

Yes. So, I think everybody's vision is to stay together, and just keep on doing what we're doing until we can't do it anymore. Retirement's pretty close to me as far as retiring— I'm sixty-two or sixty-six. I'm the oldest one in the band, and that's what I plan on doing. I can just do this until I can't do it anymore. I still can. As far as the future goes, we're just going to continue what we're doing, and see how long it takes us, or how far it takes us, really. As long as the people are liking it out there I think we'll like it. So, that's the future of us. I guess that's about it. You've asked the past and the present—

DS:

And then you talked about the future. [laugh] I was thinking about the future myself. It's like— because you had mentioned your age earlier and I was going—there's a lot of performers here that play in their seventies.

NH:

Yes, a lot of them do; Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney. Those guys are on another level than we are but if they can do it, we can do it.

DS:

As long as you have that core group that's listening to you, hey.

NH:

So anyway, that's kind of us in a nutshell.

DS:

Has the Lubbock music scene changed while you've been playing here?

NH:

For us, it has. I can only tell you where we've been. We play a lot, like I told you, so I don't get to go out very much just to kind of see what's out there. For us, we've had phases of audiences. We used to have the younger kids, like college age, for many years, I guess as long as Bleachers was open. Once Bleachers closed things started changing. They didn't like that particular kind of music. The fans that we had then graduated, they got married and all of that and it's gone, it just disappeared. We got another—then they started listening to hip-hop a lot, and we don't do that.

We do a little bit just to please a little bit of people. Hip-hop is really not live music. Most of it—it didn't matter to them. They said, "Just give us a DJ that plays this music and we're satisfied. So, we lost that crowd so we started playing in different places; more mature, which was sports grills like Buffalo Wild Wings, which is an older crowd. They're there for sports and stuff but after it's all over then we're the entertainment. We started, kind of, collecting that crowd. There's a few Texas Tech kids that still like us, so they hire us for the frat parties, stuff like that, but not as often as they used to. The reason they hire us is because they have a theme, like eighties theme, for the fraternity, so they all dress up like eighties—back in the eighties, so we're the closest live band to that, so we got hired for that. That's the reason as far as here recently. Most of the crowd nowadays is professional crowd. Their babies are grown up, they can go out again, which would be probably the kids that listened—the kids that were in high school in the eighties, I think their kids are now, you could say, big enough—they say, "Okay, we've taken [taken] care of the kids and it's time for us to just go dating again, like husband and wife. I think the majority of our crowd is husband and wife. They're ready to go back out again. We do a lot of eighties so that's good. They're coming out again so, "Hey, we got music just for you when you were in high school." [laughter] I like to hear the songs that I—when I was in high school. It just kind of takes me back and say, "A live band just does that." I said, "I'll stay here." That's the way our crowd—to me that's the way it's changed. We tried doing our music into a more tech-oriented age, like in Crickets and places like that, but it doesn't really go over well and they didn't ask us back. We didn't really want to go back because we want to please the crowd. We're not going to change our whole repertoire just to do that, so we just didn't go back. They got other things that they'd rather be listening to than us. Then that crowd—a lot of the Tech kids now, they like Texas country. They go out a lot for that, and we don't do that. We'll stick with the crowd that we have now because that's typically what we like to—they like the music that we like, so I said, "Well, let's do something we like; at least close to what we like."

DS:

Is that rewarding?

NH:

Uh-huh. I think from now on that's probably what we're going to have.

DS:

It's not a bad career considering your start, right?

NH:

Uh-huh. That's what we're going to have, that crowd; just our age, maybe a little bit younger. Of course, when I'm concerned, they're a lot younger than me, but we'll see how they last, how long they're going to go out. Sometimes people get tired of doing that. I get tired, sometimes at night time, like that. I just still do it. We, kind of see—as far as music changing generally,—I

believe live music might be a thing of the past unless something is done, but the way things are going, technology—you don't—the bands that come out now, even popular, like national acts, they don't last very long. They don't buy their CDs anymore so most of the—the way they make money is live venues. They just got to go travel everywhere, and that's how they're making—so, with the technology in place, and the way that music is being produced, it's not even with musicians anymore. You can produce it electronically, which is a lot of it. You go out there and it's electronic. It's not even a live human behind it, it's just pressing buttons on the computer, like drums. They do that a lot. There's no need—not even guitars, just keyboards, computer generated. I think I see the industry changing like that. If they keep on going another twenty years, there may not be any live music. [laugh]

DS:

That would be a sad state.

NH:

People are not interested in that anymore. “We don't want to listen to a band, we want to hear the real thing,” which is—I don't know it's going to be brought about.

DS:

Bits and bytes.

NH:

Bytes. Even—I saw an interview with Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney, and they were saying something like that; it's not even supported. Like Big X, say, I don't know, ZZ Top or something like that, they have opening bands. Opening bands want to tour with them, but they used to welcome that and they make money as well. “Hey, the opening bands going to make so much,” but they said something to the fact that now these big acts, which is their production companies, I guess—the opening band wants to do that. The opening band has to pay them to open for them, because they're going to get that much exposure. That's how it benefits the opening band, and they said, “That's pretty sad,” which it is. Really, you guys are musicians and you want them to pay you to open up for you? So that's—they're seeing that at another level, so I can imagine down here I say, “Wow, there's just no support there.” The only ones that are going to support live music are the ones that grew up with it like me, our age. My kids and their kids, they didn't—I don't think they're growing up with it. They're not growing up with a lot of music—electronic—“Ah, created electronically.” That's all they know. It's not going to be a big deal to them; to some it is. Some kids are different and listen to older stuff but the masses of them; call it—well, my son calls it “thirteen year-old girl syndrome;” whatever's popular. Those are the ones buying stuff, Taylor Swift. The thirteen year old girl syndrome.

DS:

You mentioned your son; did any of your children take up music?

NH:

Yes, my son, Sagen, he's a musician and that's what he wants to do. He's got a degree in Mass Communications. He hasn't done anything with it, but ultimately, he wants to write music, which he does write it already, but he wants to actually write it. He says he wants to write country music because a lot of people buy that, he says it's popular. He said he can do it, and he wants to sell it but I think he likes performing it better. He's actually helped me out in some of my gigs when he's visiting town. He plays the drums as well, but he also knows how to keyboard, bass and guitar, so he knows—when he records he actually does all of the parts. That's what he wants to do. Ultimately he wants to make movies, but it's along the same lines; music, movies, he can do that.

DS:

It's all creative.

NH:

That's what he does. I think he'd be doing more of it if he wasn't a world traveler; that's what he does now. He just, he goes all over the place. He actually plays a homemade instrument, and I can send you that. PVC [**Polyvinyl Chloride**] pipes. They are kind of like a xylophone; it's got different pitches and different lengths of it. He created—he made it, and he put flaps on top of it, on the top parts, so when he hits it, those flaps—he made that with—he cut flip-flops and he just put it on there. He's a street performer, and that's how he survived around the world.

DS:

Whoa.

NH:

He says he gets up to sixty bucks a day, sometimes. He's been in every—forty-nine states doing that. He's been to ten or twelve countries, I lost track. Right now he's in West Virginia, and I think he's got a project that's something that has to do with—I forgot the name of the company. You know how National Geographic does stories everywhere. He knows a journalist at the *New York Times*—as a matter of fact, he was featured in the *New York Times* with that instrument. She is going to quit there, and she's got a project with something like National Geographic, but it's not them, in Venezuela and Mexico. She asked him if he could help her do that project and I think he's going to do that, so that's his next project. So, yes, yes, he is a musician but he's kind of side tracked with that, I guess. [laughter]

DS:

Wow. That's interesting.

NH:

I have my daughter, Crystal. She's a musician as well. She can sing—I think that's her expertise there, is the singing and that's what she likes. She likes something with the arts, but she's not as bold as my son; she's, kind of, more stable. She's in Colorado. She wants to do something like that, like acting or something like that. I told her, "It's a hard business to be successful in but, hey, if you want to do that, you go on in a 100 percent."

DS:

When I got here to your office you had mentioned early on how you fell under this line of work so—or your son's, you said a street performer—you've had a semi-stable performing in Lubbock but you also have a stable job at the same time, right?

NH:

Correct, I did not do—I didn't have the guts he had to just took off. He was fresh out of college, and he just said, "You know what,"—he called it his "thirty by thirty." He wants to do thirty things by the time he's thirty years old. He's pretty much on track. One state he forgot is—oh, and I forgot—he still has to go to Hawaii. He hasn't been to Hawaii. Some things on the list, like sky jumping, he did that. He went bungee jumping in Monterrey, Mexico. Rock climbing in Rome, Italy, somewhere over there. He went to Sweden, Switzerland. He went to Abby Road, with the Beatles, and he did the superimposed his own self. He's done a lot of stuff, actually. I said, "Man, I should've done something like that when I was young," but I don't think it was anybody's mind to do that. At my age, seventy, all you knew was work hard, get your retirement, and that's it. Nowadays, these younger kids, they're thinking a little different.

DS:

You say that, and I'm going like, "That would be great but if I were to sixty by sixty, since I'm only fifty-nine, I'd be hard pressed to get it done.

NH:

I know. In my case, I won't call it "thirty by thirty", it'd would probably be my bucket list.
[laughter]

DS:

Exactly.

NH:

This is my bucket list just before I die, I'd like to do this. Playing music is one of the things. I always wanted to do that. I pictured myself as a rock star back when I was in high school. I really, really wanted to do it but, like you were saying earlier, I kind of settled into the nine to five, the normal, what society would call, the normal life. Being a musician on the road and all of that is probably not a normal life, it's different but that's what I wanted to be, but I got the next best thing. I had the normal life and I am a musician. I've got to balance it.

DS:

You're smiling as you talk about it so you must be enjoying it.

NH:

Yes, I do. I do enjoy it. I still do, I can't say I don't. There's bad days sometimes like—but hey, that's just one day. Most of the time it's good. That's what I want to do. I don't have any inclination to quit. I don't want to quit now. Honestly, I don't know if I ever will. If it hadn't happened by now, I'm not sure if it ever will.

DS:

You mentioned your first drum set was a hundred dollar drum set.

NH:

Uh-huh. I've had about—

DS:

What was your first good drum set?

NH:

The one I have now. [laughter] Of all—the way you look at it, I guess—I've had four at one time, but I guess my first good drum set was actually when I came to Lubbock. Well, no, maybe not. It's hard to explain because back in the seventies there was good drum sets, the best, like Ludwig. I don't if you're familiar with them. I bought a Ludwig in the late seventies, and I said, "This is a great set." They've come a long way from the seventies to now so the ones I have now are made a whole lot better. I would say the Ludwig set in the 1970s, seven, something like that, was my first good drum set.

DS:

It would've been because that's what was good at the time.

NH:

Yes, it was the best in the day. That was my first. Actually, my son still has those drums. I passed it onto him, and at first he didn't do anything with them but he got the bug somehow. I know somebody gave him a CD from Dream Theater, it was a progressive rock band, and he says, "Man, I want to do what that guy does." It featured the drummer. He heard that CD and there was no stopping him. He learned, like in six months, that quick. Same as the guitar, he learned it one semester in college, how to play it. I said, "Man, that was fast." He has it now so it's still around somewhere, I don't know what part of the world they're in but [laugh] they're somewhere.

DS:

Well, I appreciate you taking the time to visit with me this—Well I would say morning but we're right at noon, right?

NH:

I think so.

DS:

Oh, well I didn't ask you, this isn't really music, but how did you get into your current career?

NH:

Real estate? I told you that I had got laid off from the other job, and actually this was one of my accounts, twelve-fifteen years before that, and I always used to come in here and I saw everybody, everybody was in a positive mood and I said, "This is a different environment than where I was working." Where I was working it was you'd say, "Good morning," and I said, "What's so good about it?", "Okay, good morning. Make it good." Anyway, here, every time I came, the atmosphere was so positive, and I felt it when I walked into this place. I came here like every two weeks back in the day when I was doing that. I said, "I wonder if—I'd like to do that. I'd like to be here actually, be involved with this." I never really—I got comfortable with what I had, and the job that I had, so I never really moved on it, but right before I got laid off—I kind of felt it. The company was just not there anymore for me. I felt it kind of going down. I said, "Well, you know what, this is an opportunity for me. I wanted to do this fifteen years ago, well, this is my chance," so I did. I said, "Hey, I went to school for this," and I actually did it in three months, two months actually so it was quick. I got in here, they accepted me, and here I am. I've been doing this three years already. I keep thinking, What if I'd done this fifteen years ago? I wouldn't have had to deal with that, with that company, which wasn't Coca-Cola anymore. They sold off to somebody else. But anyway, I should've done that but I'm here now so that's all that matters. I enjoy it actually. I really do. The people are really nice and the support system from the top, man, it's a 100 percent. They support you all the way, the help you how they can, and it's a team effort; there's a lot of teamwork here and you feel it. You feel a part of, kind of like a

family. A lot of corporations nowadays, it doesn't feel like a family anymore. They got somebody better than you and you're out, get the next person in—but here it feels that way so I'm glad to be here.

DS:

Well, thank you so much.

NH:

You're welcome.

DS:

Thank you, Noe. I enjoyed it.

NH:

All right. I was wondering if we were ever going to get together. [laughter]

[End of recording]



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