

KEVIN DEAL

RAW DEAL ⊕ KEVIN DEAL BAND LIVE

"There must be something in the water: Kevin Deal is yet another serious Texas-based singer/songwriter. He's in the Steve Earle/Joe Ely mold, both in terms of style and gambler's instinct."
--Billboard Magazine

Time was--and not so long ago--that country was strictly working man's music. Working women, too, of course--and we're talking hard work here. Knuckle-busting, foot flattening, slow-to-get-up, work that has ya leaving (and returning) home in the dark in a dinged-up pickup truck that's actually used to haul things. And then, figuring out which overdue bill gets paid next.

Yep, time was it was working man's music
--in Kevin Deal's case, it still is.

Deal, a Lone Star State stone contractor who put his musical dreams on the back-burner for more than a decade while he busted tail 24-7 to keep his growing family sheltered and fed, has drawn yet another stellar batch of hard-scrabble country tunes from his blue collar experiences for RAW DEAL - Deal's first live CD.

Raw Deal, includes two brand new heart-felt singles, Hard Times and I've Got To Believe. Deal just keeps getting' better and better.

Much like a blues-ier Steve Earle, he's managed to incorporate the lessons of the classic C&W masters with a driving rock sensibility to come up with his fifth straight set of majestic, to-the-bone musical treats.

When he was a kid, Deal's family bounced around a bit, but they finally managed to settle down in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for the long haul in 1975. Along the way, Kevin was steeped in the classic country music canon by his father.

He loved country music--still does," says Deal. "And I love my dad, but he's probably not the best singer in the whole world. Still, he'd sing along to every song on the radio. Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash, George Jones --I listened to a lot of country music growin' up."

His mother was a great singer; her nightly hymns--along with his grandfather's harmonica playing--pushed him deeper and deeper into the music.

"My grandpa gave me a harmonica when I was a little kid," Kevin remembers. "He played, and I was always fascinated by that. When people ask me how you learn to play the harp, I always say, 'Well, you just have to sound really bad for a really long time.' But I kept at it, and my playing improved vastly when I learned how to play in the right key..."

Although raised on country, the teen-age Deal had to bust out a bit (of course). His hair grew longer, and he picked up the electric guitar, and his three-piece garage band worked through some of Kevin's originals, plus the obligatory Neil Young and Rolling Stones covers.

Upon graduating from high school in 1980, Kevin caught on mixing mortar for a brick crew. The band sputtered on for awhile, but when he met and married Kim--and they started a family--the Strat went into the closet, the harps went into a drawer, and Deal dove headfirst into his own fledgling stone contracting company. The dream was officially on hold, but the songs just kept on a-coming.

The dream was officially on hold, but the songs just kept on a-coming. The Deal family grew to include five kids, and when the business became a working thing by the early '90s, Kevin began playing again.

He started out playing harmonica in country cover bands, and then hooked up with Dallas bluesman Johnny Peebles.

His harp playing led to a soulful connection with Curly "Barefoot" Miller in Dallas' West End.

"I'd drive him around, and he'd take me to these bars where we'd sit in with the house band and pass the hat,"

Deal recalls fondly. "I got to experience that culture, and it was a lot of fun. I even won a talent show one night at The House Of Jock. Still have the trophy."

Kevin played with Texas honky-tonker Ed Bursleson for about four years, then caught on with Mark David Manders, who not only brought Deal onto his Blind Nello Records label, but introduced him to legendary producer/multi-instrumentalist Lloyd Maines.

With Maines at the studio board (and pickin' just about every stringed thing around), Kevin Deal has reeled off an unbroken string of pillar-to-post killers: 1998's LOVIN' SHOOTIN' CRYIN' & DYIN' (13 weeks on the Gavin Americana chart),

1999's HONKY TONKS 'N' CHURCHES (Top Ten Gavin Americana), 2001's KISS ON THE BREEZE (Top Five on the Album Network when O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU? was hogging #1), The Lawless (Top Ten on the AMA Chart) and now, the brand-spanking-new RAW DEAL-KEVIN DEAL BAND LIVE.

In their wake, he's garnered critical acclaim from Performing Songwriter, The Washington Post, CMJ, Country Music Magazine, Country Standard Time, NO DEPRESSION, USAToday, Playboy (Dave Marsh) and Music Row (Robert K. Oermann).

Deal may have capped that ol' songwriting well years ago, but--incredibly--truly big-league tunes in the grand 'Texas troubadour tradition' have just been gushing out ever since he tapped back into it.

There are two new studio cuts among the twenty-two tracks on RAW DEAL, and--like the four batches before this one--they're all hip-deep in Lone Star dust, mythology and heartbreak.

In each of Deal's songs, we're regaled with cautionary tales crowded with broke-down human wreckage either clinging to the edge or teetering over it, yet still driven by hope of redemption.

In the coming months, you'll find Kevin Deal and his road band ranging far and wide across the Lone Star State and beyond.

Get on out there and catch 'em while you can.

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