

MAGAZINE SECONDS

SECONDS #24, 1993 • interview by George Petros

JAYNE COUNTY



photos by Bob Gruen

Who now knows of JAYNE COUNTY, nee Wayne County? Forbidden in the 60s, flagrant in the 70s, fabulous in the 80s, forgotten in the 90s, Jayne was all things to all people, and was emulated or ripped off by some of the most commercially viable rebels. Andy Warhol, David Bowie, the punk rockers, and many more never would've been able to do quite what they did if it hadn't been for Wayne/Jayne County.

He was, among other things, a hard rockin' truck driver trapped inside a transvestite's body. This was not somebody to fuck with. Armed with an outrageous floor show, he assaulted his audiences, and very often had to defend himself from them. Free love? This was a free-for-all fist-fuck-fest, garage-style; guitar, bass, drums, period.

“There were other famous trans-gender people before me, but I was the first one to do it with Rock.”

SECONDS: *What was Warhol's influence on you, and vice versa?*

COUNTY: Well, the major influence of Warhol with me was freedom of expression. When I was a little teenager in Georgia, I'd get magazines and read about Andy Warhol. I wanted to go to New York and meet Andy Warhol, and people'd say to me, "You don't wanna meet those horrible people, they're like vampires," but I wanted to meet those people...

I did a play in the New York underground scene. It was called *World: The Birth Of A Nation*. It was about interchanging sexual roles. It had characters like John Wayne and he gave birth to a three-headed baby out of his asshole; that gives you the run of the play, it was totally outrageous. This was early 70s. Warhol came to see that, and flipped out. At one point I saw him standing up, he was screaming so much because some of the scenes were so over-the-top. That convinced him to do his play, Andy Warhol's *Pork*, and to use me to play *Vulva Lips*, based on *Viva*.

SECONDS: *What impact did he have on the music scene?*

COUNTY: Well, of course, The Velvet Underground was one of the most influential bands. New York bands looked up to them.

SECONDS: *How much of that was his doing?*

COUNTY: Actually, he didn't really contribute to the music. It was the whole atmosphere that surrounded him, the whole decadence thing, the whole New York subculture trip — vampires and witches.

SECONDS: *What kind of person was he?*

COUNTY: To me, he was just — I mean this in a good way — a troublemaker. He loved to cause trouble, he loved to stir it. He never missed an opportunity to stir up trouble.

SECONDS: *He liked to sit back and watch?*

COUNTY: Oooh, he loved it. He loved to just mix it up good. He'd just laugh. He loved seeing people getting mad and upset, he found that very amusing. It was entertainment to him.

SECONDS: *Why did you stop working*

with Warhol?

COUNTY: I was more into the real music scene. When The New York Dolls came along, I was floored. I loved Alice Cooper; he was the art part of it. I went to The Factory every once in a while, for an opening or something, but I didn't hang out there all the time. I wanted to make music and play clubs; I wasn't a party type of person. Plus, I didn't want to get tagged with the Warhol thing. I didn't wanna be tagged as a Warhol superstar freak that's here today, gone tomorrow. I wanted to establish myself more. A lot of the Warhol people were known for a little while by doing a few little things, and then it was over.

SECONDS: *It was like a mixed blessing.*

COUNTY: Yeah, if you got tagged, you couldn't do anything else. I didn't want that, so I cut myself off from that. My friend, Lee Childers, went to dinner with Warhol, all this kind of stuff. Andy would ask him why I never came up to The Factory. Now, I'm glad I didn't. *Pork* was my heaviest involvement with him. I did a few more little things and then I wanted to start concentrating on my music. I got really involved with The New York Dolls thing, that glitter/punk scene.

SECONDS: *Discuss the transition between the Warhol scene and the punk scene.*

COUNTY: I didn't get heavily involved with the Warhol thing. I did the play, I did parties, I knew Candy Darling. People think Patti Smith was the first person to play CBGB, but it's not true. I played CBGB while it was still having folk acts like Joan Baez imitators.

SECONDS: *Didn't you DJ at that time?*

COUNTY: I did Max's Kansas City for a long time. The Dolls came up with their acetate and handed it to me. I was the first person to ever play the Dolls. I was the first person in America to play "Anarchy In The U.K" by The Sex Pistols. I got the first copy of that and played it. I was the first to play The Damned. In fact, when I played The Damned, Dee Dee Ramone ran over to the booth and was outraged. He said, "Who is this? They're copying us!" I said they were The Damned from England. He said,

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“Those fucking English bands are copying us!” He said, “Don’t play them. Play us. Play New York people. Don’t play those stupid English bands.” Dee Dee did not like those English bands copping their sound.

SECONDS: *What characterized the bands that were around then?*

COUNTY: A lot of the bands were very amateurish, but they had something special about them. They weren’t really professional, some of them were like seeing a bad high school band. It was like flashing back to the days of teen garage bands that couldn’t play that well.

SECONDS: *You were a noted fan of The Dave Clark Five. With your old band Queen Elizabeth, were you covering Dave Clark Five stuff?*

COUNTY: No we weren’t, really. I used to introduced some of my songs on stage as dedicated to The Dave Clark Five. I’ve always covered a song by The Barbarians called “Are You A Boy? Are You A Girl?” That was a minor hit in the 1960s. The Barbarians were a California band, and the drummer played with a hook. I tie that song into what happened to me when I was growing my hair long in Georgia and people screamed at me, “Are you a boy or girl?”

SECONDS: *What did you answer?*

COUNTY: We didn’t have time because we were too busy running away! We didn’t know if they were gonna pull a gun on us. We got shot at one day walking along the street. These rednecks came along on a truck and started shooting at us. The bullets were whizzing past my ears.

SECONDS: *How was sexuality and transvestitism received by the audience in those days? I’m sure you didn’t do that in Georgia.*

COUNTY: I did very early shows down there, like in ‘65-66, I did some shows in bars. Believe or not, I used to do a Dusty Springfield imitation, a Janis Joplin imitation, and a Cher imitation. The Dusty was very good.

SECONDS: *So you were one of the first who did what might be called sex rock?*

COUNTY: Not really, I was more or less taking a piss. Laughing at sex, because sex upsets people so much, and I found that so laughable. I used to try to upset people. I

like to upset people. I used to really love to shock people. I’ll go out of my way to shock people. A lot of times, I got into really bad trouble.

SECONDS: *What kind of trouble?*

COUNTY: Like getting shot at because of the way we dressed; totally over-the-top. Getting shot at or having fights, many times we had to run down the street and hide. People would get out of their cars and start chasing us.

SECONDS: *When you did consolidate sex and transvestitism into your act later on, what was your big influence? Was it cabaret, or old film noir? Or Lenny Bruce?*

COUNTY: A lot of everything, and I loved Lenny Bruce. I even have a song I never recorded: “There’s No Such Thing As A Dirty Word.” To me, how can language be bad? That you can’t sing obscenities or say them on record is so stupid. People can stand off-stage and say ‘fuck’ but you if say ‘fuck’ onstage, you can be arrested or banned. It’s amazing the attitude in America now towards what I call trans-gender. There are so many forms of trans-gender, like transvestism, cross-dressing, drag queens, transsexuals.

SECONDS: *Transvestitism occurred before sex reassignment was popular.*

COUNTY: The Dolls would come out in old thrift-shop women’s dresses. Later on, they toned it down. A lot of people were upset they toned it down. They used to come out wearing women’s shoes, but when they got signed, they start dressing really glammy with lamé pants. I liked them better when they came out in little second-hand women’s clothes.

SECONDS: *Did they take any cues from the Mothers Of Invention? On We’re Only It For The Money, they wore dresses.*

COUNTY: I understand. Also, the back of Alice Cooper’s *Easy Action*, where they’ve got their backs turned. I remember people used to get upset about that! All it was, was the backs of their heads and their hair hanging out. How could anyone get upset over that?

SECONDS: *That was a transvestite act. At what point did androgyny become the scene?*

COUNTY: I never thought of that. I just tied it all together. To me, it was blurring

“I go out of my way to shock people.”

the sexes. I think people like Bowie and Marc Bolan commercialized it. Androgyny was a commercialization of the scene.

SECONDS: *Who would you credit as the first glam rocker? Would it be The Dolls, or did they have a precedent?*

COUNTY: I know David Johansen was very much influenced by The Theater of the Ridiculous. Iggy went to see them and everyone in the whole play was covered with glitter. He went back that night and did a big show at the Electric Circus, and came out totally covered in glitter. He was directly influenced that night by the Theater Of The Ridiculous. They'd have people in the play, playing different characters. Loads of what became gender-bending was going on in the underground theater at that time. That influenced me. The Dolls beat me by two weeks on debuting in the New York scene.

SECONDS: *Were the Dolls your peers or your competition?*

COUNTY: A little of both.

SECONDS: *Did you have a good relationship with them?*

COUNTY: A very good relationship with them. They loved me. They'd come and see our shows, and we'd go and see all theirs. I even played with the Dolls at the Mercer Art Center.

SECONDS: *How was the drug scene back in those days?*

COUNTY: When I went to London in '77 and did the first 100 Days At The Roxy, everyone was doing speed and that awful English sulfate. That's one reason the music was so fast, everyone was doing speed. That stuff would make your nose fall off. In the 60s, it was all love children doing psychedelic drugs: LSD, mescaline, THC. I was never into the heavy junk

scene. I never did any of that, I hated it. I did do lots of acid. The early 70s scene was just down into seconals and valium.

SECONDS: *How did you start working with David Bowie?*

COUNTY: When we were doing Pork, Lee Childers was stage-managing, and we got moved to The Roundhouse in London. We'd read about Bowie in a magazine, and we said we should go see him. We thought we were the only ones at the time doing anything like that. So me and Sherry and Tony Zinetta, who went on to become vice-president of MainMan, we all went to check out Bowie. We were enjoying what he was doing, but we were a little disappointed, because what he was doing at that point was so folky and laid back. He had long hair like Lauren Bacall and baggy trousers, and he was doing that stuff from *Changes* and *Hunky Dory*. I was expected it to be more outrageous, but it was really subtle.

SECONDS: *He wound up signing you to MainMan.*

COUNTY: Tony DeFries, his manager, did. As I found out later, that was

only to keep me from doing anything.

After one of his shows, me and Bowie were chatting. I'd just signed to MainMan and had all these great ideas kicking around, and I told David I had the best idea in the world. I told him I wanted to do a whole album of all British Invasion hits. Six months later he comes out with *Pin-Ups*. I was flabbergasted! When I'd say anything to anyone, they'd just laugh and say I was paranoid. I said, "Something's up here." They took me into the studio to record. I recorded "Wonder Woman," "Mexican City," "Are You Boy Or Are You A Girl?," "Queen Age Baby," all these incredible lyrics I'd come up with. So I sent him all of my tapes



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and not long after that, Sherry is sitting at the house in Connecticut. Bowie called her up and said he wrote this great song called “Rebel Rebel” and plays her this demo. She listened to it and said, “This sounds like one of Wayne’s songs.” Basically, “Queen Age Baby” is the mother of “Rebel Rebel.” If he’d never heard “Queen Age Baby,” he would’ve never written “Rebel Rebel.”

SECONDS: *Did you ever say anything to him about it?*

COUNTY: I never said anything to him about it, but when it happened, my heart sank, and it began to dawn on me that I was just being used.

SECONDS: *You weren’t the only one, right?*

COUNTY: Oh God, no. I’ll tell you another heavy story. I did this big show. The band was on one side of the stage, we had all these huge props and theatrics for every song. He comes out with the *Diamond Dogs* tour, and it’s nothing but my show with his songs! He took my whole show. I got no credit for anything.

SECONDS: *You never confronted him?*

COUNTY: No. I haven’t spoken to him in years, and if I did, I don’t know if I’d lose it. I don’t want to bother, because it’s been so long. What can I say? What can I do? I should’ve known better. And they promised me the moon the whole time. They set me up in an apartment, gave me a weekly check, bought me clothes. I was on drugs, not heavy drugs, but enough to keep me down all the time. A lot of my ideas pop up in other albums, too. I was beginning to think that I’m not paranoid at all, I’m getting totally ripped off. And then I heard they were getting ready to shelve me. He made me sign this life-long contract, and it had a suspension clause in it so they could keep me tied up for life. It had a clause in it that said if at any time I offended public morality, I could be suspended. I, like a fool, signed it because they told me it was just him being funny. Kiss’s management wanted to sign me. I sent them my tapes and they loved it. When they found out I was under contract to MainMan, they didn’t want to know me. I don’t wanna go on and on about this. I don’t wanna sound bitter.

SECONDS: *Did you have any relationship*

besides a professional one?

COUNTY: No, there was no relationship. There were little incidents, but he’d do that with a lot of people.

SECONDS: *Was he like a tease?*

COUNTY: Yeah. Sometimes the teasing got a little out of hand, but for my tastes, I found him physically repulsive. Once I went to see him, and he came into the room coked out of his mind and did a mock-rape on me. He threw me on the floor, pinned me down, dry-humped me, tried to put a hickey on my neck. I didn’t like that. I’d just say, “Get the fuck off of me.” Another time at a hotel, I went to the refrigerator for a Diet Pepsi and he came in and unzipped his trousers and started showing me his pubic hairs, because he shaved his hairs in a heart shape. He waited for me to do something and I didn’t. I just went, “That’s very nice, David,” and walked away.

SECONDS: *Did he get his way with a lot of people?*

COUNTY: He got his way with anyone he wanted to. I just found him absolutely repulsive with skinny, knobby knees with veins in them. And that skinny body, ooh. I found him totally unattractive.

SECONDS: *Not to ask you to kiss and tell, but is there anybody of note with whom you had a sexual liason?*

COUNTY: Once at Max’s, I was doing my makeup in the bathroom, and Dee Dee Ramone came in. He started peeing, and he took his cock out, and he said, “Oh, look at my cock. Look at all the scars on it where my girlfriend tried to stab me. Blah blah blah.” Just little things like that. The others I can’t tell; I’ll get in trouble.

SECONDS: *Too bad.*

COUNTY: Y’know who Chris Spedding is? I can’t really tell.

SECONDS: *Oh, go ahead.*

COUNTY: I went into this transvestive bar one night, and this guy came over, and really started doing the chat-up on me. He said, “Come back to my place, we’ll play records, I’ve got all this coke, we’ll do all these things, blah blah blah”. I didn’t have anything else to do and I said, “Okay, I’ll come over.” I didn’t realize who it was — It was Chris Spedding. He got me

***“I really don’t want to bore people.
I hate when people miss the point.”***

coked out of my mind, wound up throwing me on the bed, and begging me to do the most disgusting things that I won’t even mention to you, they were so disgusting. Finally, I left. Then, I had to go to the fucking doctor. He gave me something, nothing too heavy. I was so disappointed in Chris Spedding, I never looked at him in the same way. It wasn’t a sexual disease, it was one of those things you get, you know what I mean?

SECONDS: *I see.*

COUNTY: I don’t think he’d had a bath. I was totally turned off; I just wanted to get out of there. He was so coked up, his head kept jerking, his eyes would go off in a weird way. He was totally out of his mind. He was totally fucked up on drugs — I mean totally fucked up. It scared me. He didn’t know I was Jayne County. About a year later, he came to one of my shows with his band and they were heckling me. They were being disruptive, and so I said, “This next song is called, ‘You’re Looking Cool Daddy, But You’re Bad In Bed.’ And it’s dedicated to ...” and I pointed right at him, “Chris Spedding.” They were quiet after that.

SECONDS: *Why did you leave New York and go to London?*

COUNTY: Lee Childers was in London managing the Heartbreakers. They were on The Anarchy Tour. The Sex Pistols dropped off, and The Damned continued. He rang up my manager and said, “We’ve gotta get Wayne here, because England’s punk scene is incredible; it’s a lot more theatrical, and Wayne would fit in well here.” The punk scene in England was more theatrical; it was more visual. The reaction to me was so

incredible, that I decided, “I’m just gonna stay here.”

SECONDS: *As a transsexual, at what point during your transformation from male to female did Wayne County become Jayne County?*

COUNTY: It was the way I was beginning to look with my new figure. I was looking better than ever, more and more like the female gender. Coming out as Wayne just wasn’t on anymore. Patti Palladin told me there’s no way I could come onstage anymore looking the way I did and calling myself a man. If I was gonna have that image, I needed a name to fit.

SECONDS: *Tell us about sex reassignment.*

COUNTY: There are different degrees of transsexualism. Because you’re a transsexual, it doesn’t necessarily mean you have to have a full sex change. A lot of transsexuals are quite well adapted to just remain in the middle. In

fact, it would do a lot of transsexuals harm to do a full sex change. It doesn’t have to be black or white; it doesn’t have to be a full sex change. If you get to a certain point with your body, from the hormone treatments and all, if you’re comfortable there, you should just stay there. There’s no point in going all the way if you feel uncomfortable. I was on the verge — I was like an inch close to doing it — then I thought, “I feel comfortable now, I don’t think I’m gonna have to do it.” If I had a full sex change, then regretted it, it’d be too late to go back over the bridge and I might commit suicide.

SECONDS: *Are you a hermaphrodite?*

COUNTY: Yes. To classify myself is hard, because it’s psychological. I’d classify



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myself, at the moment, as that, because it takes in all forms of transsexuality, transvestism, drag queen, cross-dressing, whatever — I'd say I'm trans-gender.

SECONDS: *When you began your sex reassignment, how did your friends and associates react?*

COUNTY: One person who acted strange was Patti Smith. I ran into her, and I was just beginning my hormones, and my little titties were just beginning to peek out of my tee shirt. We were talking, and her eyes were fixed down there, and she started getting really nervous. I read where Patti had said things like, she was comfortable around gay men who still acted like men, but not comfortable around people who were considered men who don't really act like men. She was very uncomfortable because she had it in her mind that I was Wayne and I was a guy doing this little transition. I don't know where that comes from with her. Some people got very strange and others thought it was just fabulous. Some people in the business got really weird with me.

SECONDS: *Why did Wayne County become Jayne County?*

COUNTY: It helped me to deal with myself and basic reality, of what's happening around me. It was harder for me to deal with life in general when I was just Wayne, the little boy who had a big nose and wore too much mascara. People still considered me with an attitude like I'm a real guy. I was thinking I wasn't a guy at all, I was one of the girls.

SECONDS: *You were proud of what you were, and stood up for that.*

COUNTY: I'm very proud of being a pioneer in that way, and also being one

of the first trans-gender people to go into straight rock places and do what I do. A trans-gender person is a culmination of both sexes. It's one who transposes certain aspects of one's sex and mixes it in with aspects of the other sex. I like that. To me, that's very appealing. I find it totally fascinating. I find it totally political without marching down the street with a sign.

SECONDS: *What do you think Bowie's reaction to all this would've been? Would he have ran out and gotten a sex change if you'd gotten one back in the 70s?*

COUNTY: No. Maybe he should of. I think he was more of a put-on. There were completely straight people coming into Max's Kansas City, and they'd say they were bi-sexual. Bowie was the king of that. It's very psychological; it goes back to every aspect of your being — what you are and how

you got there. It's heavy, to cop a 1960's expression.

SECONDS: *It took a lot of nerve. Any medical procedure is inherently dangerous.*

COUNTY: Someone gave me a book that showed the whole medical procedure. They went into detail, what they had to do. It horrified me. I read about what occurred — you have to have this big round thing up yourself for six months. I don't think I could've psychologically handled it. I think I would've totally freaked out. As someone who's done a lot of LSD in the 60s, I think that might be one of the reasons I couldn't go on with the whole thing.

SECONDS: *If you were just coming on the scene now, would you do this all over again?*

COUNTY: The idea is old. I went to the Metropolitan Museum in New York and I was looking at this statue. It was a



“He got me coked out of my mind, wound up throwing me on the bed, and begging me to do the most disgusting things that I won’t even mention to you, they were so disgusting.”

statue of a woman, and they had it positioned so that you could only see the back; you couldn’t really see the front. The front part was positioned more towards the wall. You could barely see it, and it was a hermaphrodite. I could peek around just enough to see it was a statue of a hermaphrodite laying on a couch. It had breasts, but it also had a cock. Hermaphrodites were considered to be the utmost in holiness. What’s turned people against those who have aspects of both sexes is this religion that teaches you either got to be this or that. But that’s where the problem comes in. They’re trying to make us be something that we’re not. I object to religions doing that. That messes up people’s minds more than anything. That messes people up; they should not be forced to be this or that. There’s no such thing as anyone who’s just this or that.

SECONDS: *Is your sex reassignment surgery partial or complete?*

COUNTY: What’s happened is, basically, physically I can be classified as a hermaphrodite. I have beautiful, fabulous female breasts, a woman’s shape, my face is real feminine and everything, but I’m still what people would classify biologically as male down below.

SECONDS: *Alright!*

COUNTY: Basically, I’m a hermaphrodite.

SECONDS: *I gotcha.*

COUNTY: I knew a hermaphrodite in England and some hermaphrodites do have both sex organs. Others have maybe like a penis that’s small, or actually they have a vagina, but they actually have balls that are up in them, or whatever. Medically, I’d

be considered a pre-operative transsexual. A post-operative, that’s who’s got a full sex change. A pre-operative transsexual is a transsexual who has the female shape, the breasts and everything, but they haven’t had the operation. In general, I just consider myself trans-gender.

SECONDS: *And are you happy?*

COUNTY: Yes.

SECONDS: *Well, that’s the important thing. What kind of criticism about your work bothers you the most?*

COUNTY: Well, I wouldn’t wanna hear that I was uninteresting. I hate for my music to be called uninteresting. I’d hate to be called boring. I really don’t want to bore people. I hate when people miss the point.

SECONDS: *What’s the highest compliment you’ve ever received?*

COUNTY: When *16 Magazine* called me the Lenny Bruce of Rock & Roll.

SECONDS: *What’s the best music to have sex to?*

COUNTY: The best music to have sex to — I’d have to think about that because I haven’t had sex in over a year. I have no libido. To me, sex is very boring. It’s just too much trouble. I’d rather have wet dreams; it’s easier. Does the sex have to be good?

SECONDS: *No.*

COUNTY: I’d say probably if you put on The Velvet Underground, the sex could probably turn out to be, shall we say, interesting. But if you put on something really laid back like — can you imagine having sex with The Mamas And The Papas on? ●●●