



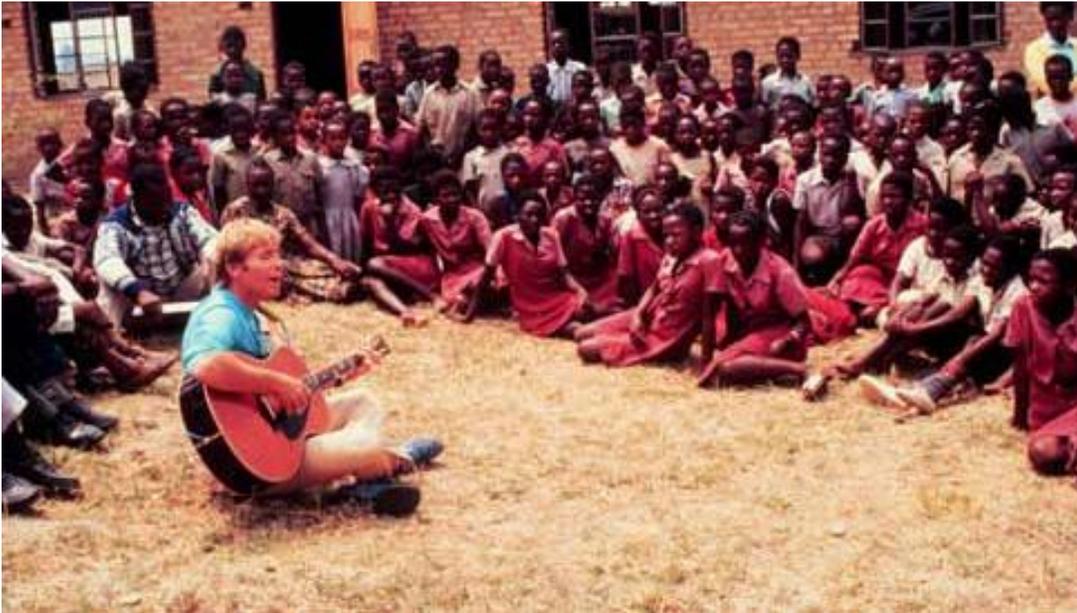
## "WHAT ONE MAN CAN DO"

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A documentary film proposal based on the life and legacy of

# John Denver

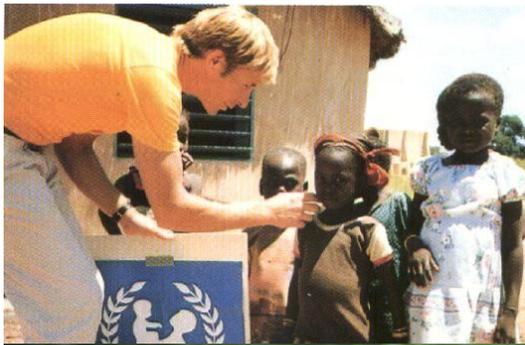
*Celebrating the Power of the Creative Spirit*



Proposed by JoLynn Long and Terry Lipman  
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CONVERSATION

# Rocky Mountain guy worries for the world

By Bruce Pollock  
Special for USA TODAY

As a man who has met both God and Frank Sinatra, John Denver might well feel his career has no further heights to reach. But the Air Force pilot's son, who's been celebrating his own homey Rocky Mountain High for more than 20 years, is in quest of another peak. He wants to perform aboard the space shuttle. He'd also like to reach the top of the record charts, a lofty realm he hasn't visited since 1975. His latest attempt is *It's About Time*.



By Bob Sell  
JOHN DENVER: The folk-pop singer wants to toug the USA with a solo show — just him and acoustic guitar — next year.

... talked about doing a song together and I wrote *Wild Montana Skies* thinking of her voice. ... Emmylou considers herself the founding member of a club of people who will not sing in unison. But there's one note on the song that is in unison, and she happened to hit it and I heard it and she wanted to change it, but I said, "No way!"

USA TODAY: You seem to be one of the few artists who still believe in the power of songs to effect change.  
DENVER: I really do. It's

people together, it's that with-in music we experience that human beings are all the same. There's so much in the world today that separates us from that kind of feeling. People have asked me over the last few years if I had any thoughts of going into politics, and I really did think about it. But the truth is that I feel I have a much greater opportunity for positive change by being a singer than I ever could as a politician.

USA TODAY: Which of your recent songs reflect  
DENVER: I really do. It's

But what's happened out of that is, boy, now I've got no excuses. Now I can get on with this stuff, there's no reason not to. And that's what I've done in the past year. ... People ask me if I think I'll get married again — do I have a lady. No, I don't have a committed relationship right now. I can't imagine getting married again.

USA TODAY: How does turning 40 compare with turning 30?

DENVER: Turning 30 is kind of all in your mind. You're no longer free and easy; you'd better start settling down. But at 40, half your life is over and what happens is you start to look downhill from here. ... But where I am right now is fairly wealthy, very successful in the work that I do, just getting divorced, having difficulty getting a hit record. I'm pretty sure I can always work, but I don't know if it's ever going to be like it once was. ...

What I want to do now is ... rest, get back in shape, back on my diet, do some reading, some meditation. In the spring I want to do a major concert tour.



## Country-Sänger Denver bei Flugzeugabsturz getötet

Monterey. (dpa) Der amerikanische Country- und Folksänger John Denver ist beim Absturz eines von ihm selbst gesteuerten Flugzeugs ums Leben gekommen. Der



John Denver

53jährige stürzte mit einem einmotorigen Zweisitzer im Steilflug in die Bucht von Monterey in Kalifornien. Er schlug knapp 100 Meter von der Küste entfernt im Pazifischen Ozean auf. Fans in aller Welt betraurten den beliebten Sänger. Zu seinen größten Hits gehören »Take Me Home, Country Road« und »Rocky Mountain High«. Seine Anhänger liebten ihn wegen seiner jugenhafte Art, seiner optimistischen Songs und der strahlenden Art, in der er sie vortrug. Als einer der prominentesten amerikanischen Countrystars besang er vor allem die Berge.

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY**



***What one man can do is dream  
What one man can do is love  
What one man can do is change the world and make it young again.  
Here you see what one man can do.***

Everyone knows John Denver as an entertainer. But few know him as a humanitarian - a man of the people, a man of the earth.

This is the documentary that's yearning to be told.

John Denver firmly believed that his celebrity was given to him for a purpose. He saw his role on this planet as a catalyst to bring people together and to create a world of peace and sustainability, and in this, he inspired people to action. He co-founded The Windstar Foundation and educated millions on the future of our environment. He fought world hunger, and he strove for world peace. He sang with Soviets and sang for the Chinese. He supported NASA's space program at a time when its future was in jeopardy.

This documentary's content will highlight the extraordinary contribution Denver made – not just by himself, but in the way he brought others along and talked to them about what *they* could do. This film is not about John Denver, but about what it is to be a human being to celebrate the creative spirit; to show what humans can accomplish given the personal courage, the commitment, and the discipline. This is the legacy he left.

Through a combination of interviews and stories from those who traveled with him, plus the use of archival footage and still photographs in filing cabinets around the world, audiences will get to experience in their hearts the seeds John Denver planted and how those seeds have grown and lifted the consciousness of so many lives. Most urgently, it will highlight the importance of John's mission, and call us to take it on ourselves; to continue our fight for world peace, freedom, and the sustainability of our future generations. We'll discover where we might fit into the jigsaw puzzle of human experience and be inspired to make our own positive difference.

All of us are faced with increasingly difficult choices within what seems a chaotic world. Global climate changes, the war on terror, corruption, pollution, looming fossil fuel shortages, hunger, and AIDS are all seemingly intractable issues that tempt us to surrender, become apathetic or act in dysfunctional ways.

This documentary will inspire people. It will show them that they can make a difference. It will show them, through the life of an ordinary man with nothing but a dream and a commitment to succeed, *What One Man Can Do*.

# SCRIPT TREATMENT (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)

The movie traces John Denver's personal journey – not to pay tribute to a pop star, but to see a man struggling with himself, his image, his relationships, and his heartfelt desire to make a difference. It is important that we see ourselves in John. If he remains someone who is larger than life – a pop star AND a humanitarian – then we, the audience, might walk away feeling like it's not about us; it's about people who have gifts, people who are "special" in a way we're not. The message of the film is that it is about you, me, and the desire we all feel to make a difference.

We start by tracing his childhood. Through interviews with family members and friends, as well as 8 mm home movies from his childhood, we see how Henry John Deutschendorf, Jr., the son of an Air Force officer and flight instructor, faced challenges growing up, moving all around the country, so no place felt like home. How he started playing his grandmother's guitar at the age of 12 and started writing songs of love and longing: an in-the-world longing for love, for Annie; and also for something higher, as expressed in his songs influenced by nature.

As we interview people along that path – those he worked with, those who inspired him – we begin to see how John came to be the man he was; where his beliefs came from; how he wrote and sang his songs. Since the audience is following the same arc that John did, we will inevitably come to the same conclusions and commitments; for example, that "it's about time", which comes from a place of wisdom and knowing, a place of deep humility, love, and compassion.

As we join John in adulthood, we'll be able to bring in the wealth of stock footage available to illustrate the peak of his career, and with that, the platform he stood on to pursue his vision for humanity:

**Fostering World Peace and Global Understanding** – John Denver's 1986 album *One World*, dedicated to the cause of peace, included the song "Let Us Begin (What Are We Making Weapons For?)" which he recorded with the USSR's most popular recording artist, Alexander Gradsky. This was the first time a Soviet and Western artist sang together, and the two went on to perform on stage together in Russia, America, and all over the world. John went on to be the first Western artist to perform in Communist China and Vietnam.



**Environmental Conservation** – John's flagship interest was with the Windstar Foundation, which he co-founded to educate people on environmental issues and to inspire them to make responsible choices toward a peaceful and environmentally sustainable future. By working toward this goal, the annual *Choices for the Future* symposium became one of The Windstar Foundation's core activities. John continued to support all kinds of environmental causes, the development of a documentary to convince Congress to create the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

**Ending of world hunger** – Jimmy Carter appointed John Denver to his President's Commission on World Hunger, from which John personally co-founded The Hunger Project, which teaches those facing starvation to manage their own agricultural needs. The Hunger Project has flourished for over 30 years, and is currently working in thousands of communities in 13 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the 1980s he went to Africa and India to witness the problem firsthand, ultimately testifying before Congress in support of funding for these world causes. In 1985, President Ronald Reagan conferred on John Denver the Presidential World Without Hunger Award for his "vision, initiative, and leadership in the effort to achieve a world without hunger" and for his years of dedication and commitment to this worldwide cause.

## John Denver gives historic Vietnam concert

By BRUCE STANLEY  
Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — Country singer John Denver brought his message of music as a healing force to Vietnam on Sunday, becoming the first American star to perform in the communist country since the Vietnam War ended in 1975.

The United States and Vietnam still have no diplomatic relations. Progress toward restoring relations was made in February when President Clinton dropped a 19-year trade embargo of Vietnam.

Denver, who lives in Aspen, and his four-man band played to a mixed audience of Vietnamese and expatriates in Hanoi's cultural palace. Vietnam is his last stop on a six-nation Asian tour. "It actually is a bit of a dream come true for me to sing here," Denver said after arriving in the Vietnamese capital Saturday. "I was just starting my career back when we were at war with this country."

Denver said he was fortunate not to have been drafted into the military, due to two missing toes. He joined in anti-war protests in Washington and elsewhere, he said. "I thought if I ever go to Vietnam, it will be to sing there," he said.

Denver told his listeners in between songs that



DENVER IN HANOI: John Denver is surrounded by children at the Children's Palace on Sunday in Hanoi.

he cared deeply about helping to create a greater sense of global community and partnership.

"I'd love to move our people a little closer together, to heal the wounds that are obviously there for both sides," he said in an interview.

Denver's first performance in Vietnam included some of his best known hits, such as "Take Me Home, Country Roads" and "Rocky Mountain High." The audience responded with polite applause.

But several seats remained empty during the show, possibly because the lowest priced ticket — \$25 — is more than one-tenth the average annual salary.

Denver said afterward that he had trouble gauging the Vietnamese reaction.



**Advocacy for the Space Program** – John had a natural love for flying. In 1980 he hosted an award-winning TV special entitled “The Higher We Fly: The History of Flight, which included a guided tour through NASA’s Space Shuttle Simulator. He worked diligently to help create the “Citizens in Space” program, for which he received NASA’s Public Service Medal, usually reserved for spaceflight engineers and designers, and was a finalist to become the first citizen to fly into space. Ultimately, teacher Christa McAuliffe earned that pyrrhic honor, as the Challenger exploded with her on board. John dedicated his song “Flying for Me” to her and all of the astronauts, and testified before Congress in favor of continuing the space program at a time when NASA’s future was being debated.



These are just a few of the contributions John made throughout his life, just a few of the changes he catalyzed, and just a few of the issues that will make it into the film. The audience will discover that what started out as an exploration of a young man’s rise to fame is actually much more than that – it’s about the will to make a difference and how we, as members of humanity, have a say about that.

By the end of the film, we will find ourselves in 2007 in exactly the place that John was singing and writing about. In a way, we will hear John’s voice for the first time and understand that he was singing our song, and we’ll hear his music and his words in a new way. We’ll realize he did make the difference he longed to make. Not only in big ways – through Windstar, through his role as a leader of the environmental movement, through inspiring others to use their music and popularity to make political statements and affect change – but by inspiring people like you and me to make that difference, too. And we’ll see that maybe, if we all dream our dreams out loud as he did, we can make that difference, too.

***It's about time we start to see it,  
the earth is our only home.  
It's about time we start to face it,  
we can't make it here all alone.  
It's about time we start to listen  
to the voices in the wind,  
It's about time and it's about  
changes and it's about time.***

***I had a son and my son was a soldier  
He was so like my father, he was so  
much like me  
To be a good comrade was the best that  
he dreamed he could be  
He gave up his future to revolution  
His life to a battle that just can't be won  
For this is not living, to live at the point  
of a gun***

***What one man can do  
is dream  
What one man can do  
is love***



***What one man can do is  
change the world and  
make it young again.  
Here you see what one  
man can do.***



## **THE MUSIC OF JOHN DENVER**

At the age of 12, Henry John Deutschendorf, Jr.'s grandmother gave him a guitar to help overcome his shyness, a tool that did its job and served him well in making friends for the rest of his life. He moved to Los Angeles in 1964 to try his success as a singer and songwriter, changing his name to the more marquee-friendly "John Denver" and performing with the Chad Mitchell Trio for several years. In 1969, the group disbanded and his solo career started, writing the song "Leaving on a Jet Plane," which rose to number one with the popular group Peter, Paul, and Mary, and ultimately performing in his own spotlight.

Since 1972, John Denver has sold more than 60 million albums around the world. His 1973 "Greatest Hits" package racked up sales of over 10 million — an unprecedented achievement for a compilation disc. In the U.S. alone, John Denver had 10 No. 1 hits and multiple RIAA certification awards: 21 Gold album awards, 14 Platinum album awards and seven multi-Platinum album awards. As an actor, he starred in the movie hit "Oh, God!" with George Burns. He hosted several musical variety specials, including the Emmy Award-winning "An Evening with John Denver." He performed with artists ranging from Frank Sinatra to the Muppets and recorded duets with Emmylou Harris ("Wild Montana Skies") and Placido Domingo ("Perhaps Love").

John had a love-hate relationship with the media, and as such was often unable to bring attention to the songs that spoke to him the most: songs like "African Sunrise," and "I Want to Live," about the rampant starvation around the world; pleas for peace like "Falling Leaves" and "Let Us Begin (What Are We Making Weapons For?)" ; "The Wings That Fly Us Home" and "The Gift You Are," about the human spirit; "Looking for Space," "It's A Possibility," "Sweet Surrender" on human potential; and of course, on making a difference, "It's About Time" and "What One Man Can Do."

These songs show how large a heart John Denver had. Though his huge hits like "Take Me Home, Country Roads," "Sunshine on My Shoulders," and "Rocky Mountain High" will certainly make their way into the film, we owe it to John to give a voice to the ones that called to him so strongly, but which the critics never seemed to want to know.

*Many of us who listened to John Denver as 20 yr-olds had a 20-year-old experience of the music. It touched us deeply, but we didn't quite know why. Many of us listened to his music in private. It was a hidden pleasure because it was not "cool" and we wanted to be "cool". It was hard to square the longings we felt when we listened to his music with our intellectual, striving-to-be-sophisticated, striving to be our in-the-world successful selves. Now we discover that the reason the music resonated is that it came from another, deeper place: a place that we were being pulled toward all along.*

*-- Kim Agnew*

John Denver died in 1997 when a plane he was piloting crashed just off the coast of California at Pacific Grove. He was cremated alongside his 1910 Gibson guitar, which his grandmother gave him when he was 12 to help overcome his shyness.

What a gift his grandmother gave him. What a gift she gave the world.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

**Nathaniel Kahn (Director)** – The two-time Oscar-nominated director/producer of *My Architect* (2003) and *Two Hands* (2007). Starting his career in theater, he moved into film in the early 1990s with a short film, "The Room", which was screened at Sundance and won an award at Cannes. He then collaborated with Miranda Productions on a number of environmentally themed documentaries, including *My Father's Garden* (which was featured at Sundance and broadcast by the Sundance Channel), and *Wilderness: The Last Stand* (which was broadcast by PBS and nominated for a regional Emmy Award).

In 2003, after years of dedication, he was able to make and release *My Architect: A Son's Journey* about his journey to understand his father, a world-famous architect who had died 30 years earlier. For his outstanding tale of exploration, *My Architect* earned Nathaniel Kahn a number of acclamations, including an Academy Award nomination, an IFP Independent Spirit Award nomination, a Director's Guild of America DGA Award, and the audience awards at no less than 4 major film festivals.

Kahn followed up his success with last year's *Two Hands: The Leon Fleisher Story*, which earned him a second Academy Award nomination. We are honored to have such an amazing filmmaker as the driving creative talent behind our team.

**Susan Rose Behr (Producer)** – Also a two-time Academy Award nominee, Susan Behr is the wind beneath Kahn's wings as the producer of *My Architect* and *Two Hands*. Having served as a researcher and coordinator with an expertise in historical locations, documents, and information, she brings an essential talent to the team. Behr is the queen of acquiring archival footage, a skill that will serve us well in a documentary about an entertainer ten years passed.

**Terry Lipman (Executive Producer, Project Developer)** – Terry spent 25 years as the CEO of a Sydney-based international insurance and financial services company and helped film companies take advantage of tax breaks introduced by the Australian government in the 1980s. Until his retirement in 1989, his organization participated in over 200 film and TV productions, including the smash hit *Crocodile Dundee*.

For these and other services to niche Australian industries, Lipman was awarded The Australian Small Business Award for Entrepreneurial Services to the Community in 1982 and was nominated in 1983 for The BHP Award of Excellence, Australia's most prestigious annual small business award.

Lipman met John Denver in Australia and then co-founded the Windstar Foundation Australia, which produced *Higher Ground* in Sydney. Lipman continued to co-produce events for Denver, first in Australia, and then in Aspen. In October of 1997 the two met and discussed the making of a documentary about the effect one man can have on the world – using the entertainer's legacy and commitment toward making a difference as a positive example.

John Denver died a week later. For a time, Terry worked on other professional endeavors, but is now returning to the commitment his friend left behind to show the world what one man can do.

**John Raatz (Marketing)** – Founder and CEO of The Visioneering Group, Raatz was credited with the success of *What the #\$\*! Do We Know!?*, which "doggedly hung on at theaters while better films – with bigger budgets and marketing efforts – faded away." (Washington Post, March 20, 2005) The Visioneering Group is a multi-faceted public relations firm, which focuses on linking together cutting-edge businesses to ensure the success of an extraordinary product. As a skilled and experienced communicator, strategist, and entrepreneur, Raatz will drive our PR machine to ensure that once the film has been made, it will enjoy lasting success.

**Jessica Cohen (Line Producer, Production Manager)** – An A-rated line producer, Jessica most recently enjoyed success as the line producer on one of the most challenging documentaries ever made, Martin Scorsese's recent *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, which won an Emmy, a Grammy, and 4 other major awards, as well as 3 additional Emmy nominations and a BAFTA TV Award nomination.

**Craig Hella Johnson (Music)** – To enhance the impact of John's music, we've recruited one of the most respected choral/orchestral conductors in the nation. Having studied at Julliard, Yale, and the International Bach Academy in Stuttgart, he has served as the artistic director for number of organizations, including his current choral group, Conspirare, which was nominated for a Grammy Award this year.

## ***PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT***

The following individuals, who were associated with John Denver at some point in his life, have expressed their support and/or agreed to be interviewed for this film:

**Dr. Noel Brown** – As UNEP’s Director, Noel was a frequent speaker at the annual “Choices For The Future” Symposia, contributed to John’s involvement as a mediator at the Earth Summit in Brazil and in the creation of The Aspen Global Change Institute.

**Cheryl Charles** – Directed the Windstar Foundation and published, with her husband Bob Samples, the international Windstar Journal.

**Tom Crum** - Co-founder of the Windstar Foundation, Tom traveled with John for many years as his security man. Tom is a major leader in the field of conflict resolution using Aikido as a metaphor for life.

**Dr. Betty Sue Flowers** - Author, poet, internationally renowned business consultant, and currently the Director of the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum, spoke at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Windstar Foundation “Choices for the Future” symposium in 1991. Director for KLRU, the Austin affiliate of the PBS Network.

**Bruce Gordon** – Close friend, promoted the use of small planes to educate people about the environment

**John Katzenberger** - Director of the Aspen Global Change Institute.

**Dr. Phil Lane Jr.** – The first indigenous person to win the Windstar Award, Dr. Lane has worked with Indigenous peoples in North, Central and South America, Micronesia, Thailand, India, Hawaii and Africa.

**Martin. N. Leaf** - John Denver's lawyer, also served as a member of Trailblazers, the Windstar Board of Directors, Buckminster Fuller Board of Directors and many other Boards, including the est Foundation.

**Donna Lipman** – Terry’s wife, co-founded Windstar New York, sang with John Denver in Aspen, and worked with him on the “Choices for Future” Symposia.

**Malcolm McDonald** - John’s personal assistant.

**Dr. Jordan Paul** - Psychotherapist, college professor, author, business consultant and motivational speaker, co-produced “Choices for the Future”.

**Pam Peterson** – Western Regional Director of the Challenger Center, worked with John when he served on NASA’s Board of Advisors.

**Rev. Dr. David Randall** – President and Executive Director of the WHALE Center (Wellness, Health and Lifestyle Education), served as program development coordinator for the Windstar Foundation, helped lead a team of 150 persons at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and was John’s political lobbyist, helping him a number of appearances at Senate and other hearings in Washington on environmental and space issues.

**Rusty Schweikert** – Astronaut and close friend of John’s.

**Rolland Smith** - Author, poet and CBS morning show anchor, hosted John Denver’s annual “Choices For The Future Symposia” in Aspen Colorado and became a close confidante and a Director of Windstar.

**John St. Augustine** – An award-winning radio talk show host, wrote about John Denver in his book, "Living An Uncommon Life - Essential Lessons from 21 Extraordinary People".

**Hal Thau** – John Denver’s business partner and manager and one of the original directors of the Windstar Foundation.

**Steve Weisberg** – Former lead guitarist for John Denver.

**Robert White** – Leader in professional development and human potential success training, continually donated executive training to the Windstar Foundation Board and staff, ultimately serving on its Board of Directors.

**Bud Wilson** – An original producer of the “Choices For The Future Symposium.

**Thomas T. K. Zung** - Architect, and president of the Buckminster Fuller Institute.



JOHN DENVER MEMORIAL ASPEN COLORADO

