

# Eddy Shaver

Guitarist, arranger, and songwriter; b. John Edwin Shaver, June 20, 1962; d. December 31, 2000; son of legendary Texas singer-songwriter Billy Joe Shaver and wife Brenda Shaver. Because his father was a well-known performer, Eddy Shaver grew up around music and musicians. By the age of 12, he could play the guitar and went on to learn guitar techniques from some of his father's famous friends, including Dickey Betts of the Allman Brothers Band.

By age 13, Eddy began playing on some of his father's demo recordings, including "When I Get My Wings." This early exposure to performing and recording gave Eddy the chance to network with other musicians, and he soon began playing and touring with the band, The Can't Hardly Playboys. Within a few years, Billy Joe had taken Eddy out of school, and the two began recording more demos together. With Eddy on lead guitar and his father on vocals, the two soon landed a recording contract with Capricorn Records in California.

Eddy had a unique playing style that some referred to as "controlled distortion." This technique of stretching out notes, while still staying on the beat caught the attention of country star Dwight Yoakam in 1984. Eddy went on to tour with Yoakam for two years in 1987 and 1989. Eddy also performed with many other artists including Guy Clark, Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson, and Willie Nelson.

In 1993, Billy Joe and Eddy Shaver released the critically-acclaimed album *Tramp on Your Street*. Throughout the 1990s, Eddy's guitar work brought him great acclaim and even comparisons to Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Perhaps ironically, it was Eddy's hard-driving rock and roll guitar style that also earned the father-son duo some criticism. Some fans argued that Eddy's guitar playing did not fit well with Billy Joe's more traditional honky-tonk style. Nevertheless, the two continued recording and performing together.

In 1999, Brenda Shaver died of cancer. Eddy was devastated by the loss of his mother. Soon afterward, he admitted to his father that he was a heroin addict. Eddy's unsuccessful attempts at drug rehabilitation led to growing conflicts with Billy Joe. However, the two were able to reconcile some of their problems when they recorded their next album, *The Earth Rolls On*, which featured their duet "Blood is Thicker than Water," and was scheduled for release in the spring of 2001.

As 2000 was coming to a close, Eddy Shaver was working to stay off of drugs and was looking forward to recording a solo album on the Antone's Records label. However, on December 30, 2000, he was found unconscious in a Waco hotel room and was pronounced brain dead at 2:58 A.M. on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The details of his death are unclear, but police determined that Eddy Shaver died of an accidental heroin overdose. Despite the tragedy, Billy Joe decided to

play his scheduled New Year's Eve show in Austin, where he was joined by Willie Nelson and numerous other friends in remembering Eddy Shaver's life and career.

Eddy Shaver is survived by his wife, Irene Triola Shaver, his father, Billy Joe Shaver, his Aunt Patricia Shaver, and numerous cousins and friends. He is buried at Heritage Memorial Park in Waco.

*Erinn Park*