



# VENTS

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# MOTHER MOTHER

Host of the Month





**Mohamed Karim**

**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed Egyptian actor, producer, TV host, and – WHEW! – doctor Mohamed Karim; greetings and salutations Mohamed, and thank you for taking time out of your very busy schedule to talk with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the Q&A celluloid pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

So far, great! My film was released in April, and now I'm prepping for another one. Keeping busy!

**Major kudos and accolades on your freshly minted bravura turn in the new Lionsgate motion picture *Gunslingers*, which is lighting up box offices around the ever-loving globe even as we speak! Starting at the top, can you explain to our ever-inquisitive readers what *Gunslingers* is about and how your character figures into the proceedings?**

My character is Hudo, one of the gunslingers. The film shows solidarity, unity, and showing up for your peers. Everybody is hiding from something, but it all comes back to togetherness and protection. It teaches you to stand up for your friends and to stand for good against evil.

**Did you know as soon as the screenplay for *Gunslingers* from writer/director Brian Skiba crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?**

I knew I wanted to be a part of it from day one because one of my dreams has always been to play non-stereotypical roles. Doing a Western checked my priority box because it is so far from what people expect of me. I always like to surprise people, and I think Brian helped me to achieve that. It's amazing to be the first-ever Middle Eastern Hollywood cowboy!

**You work with such an amazing cast of actors in *Gunslingers*, including the likes of Stephen Dorff, Heather Graham, Nicolas Cage, Costas Mandylor, and William McNamara to name but a few! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this ensemble?**

It was a privilege working with them. I had so much fun!

**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like collaborating with writer/director Brian Skiba on *Gunslingers*? Is Brian what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

Brian is such a great director, and I had amazing chemistry with him. We had great synergy, and he really wanted me to work with him. I think he envisioned a diverse cast in his film.

***Gunslingers* is a Western, a genre that is enjoying a resurgence with such new and upcoming films as *Horizon*, *Rust*, and *Young Guns III*. What do you think it is about the Western genre that is so appealing to audiences of any era?**

I grew up watching Clint Eastwood films with my dad. In the Middle East, we have a lot of Arabian horses, which I love. Given that I watched these films growing up, it's amazing and fascinating to be part of this world. I'm so blessed, and this is one of my major accomplishments. I'm breaking the mold of Hollywood by doing this type of role!

**In the wake of the April 11th theatrical release of your new film *Gunslingers*, you have a full dance card with past projects such films as *Facebook Romance*, *Score to Settle*, and host of *The Voice: Arabia* congrats! Can you give readers and cinephiles a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with these new films?**

I am currently developing three different projects, and one of them will be announced in Cannes—a cross-cultural movie being shot between the U.S. and the Middle East! See more [HERE!](#)

**How did you land upon the pathway of wanting to be an accomplished actor, and how do you juggle your passion for acting along with other interests such as producing?**

You learn from the legends before you, and most of them wore many hats. If you want to do something as an artist, you make your dreams a reality from an "idea." You just have to create it from scratch, which is how you jump into the producer role! Both of them help each other and get to the outcome you're aiming for. You have to do it yourself—create, create, create! I have many connections and am a people person, so with my capabilities and connections, I can make it happen.

**Your first credited work as an actor came in the film *Youm El Karama*. Any special memories of that freshman production?**

We lived on a ship for three months—a Navy seal ship with rockets firing!

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite Western film – *Open Range*, *Tombstone*, *The Searchers*, *The Wild Bunch*, *High Noon*, *Silent Tongue*, or *Dances with Wolves*?**

*Dances with Wolves!*







# SOFIA YEPES

**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed producer, writer and thespian Sofia Yepes; greetings and salutations Sofia and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

-Ah, well... 2025 started off a little shaky, not gonna lie. But things have leveled out, and lately it's been all about growth—personally, professionally, spiritually. I'm in a season of building, grounding, and trusting the process. We're feeling good over here.

**Major kudos and accolades on your beautiful new film *The Low End Theory* which is currently wowing audiences through streaming service extraordinaire In The Black Network's brand-spankin' new Latin division! Can you talk with readers about what *The Low End Theory* is about and how your character of Raquel Pacheco figures into the proceedings?**

Thank you so much! It's been incredible to see *The Low End Theory* finding its audience—especially through In The Black Network's new Latin division. That kind of platform means everything when you're telling stories from the margins.

At its heart, *The Low End Theory* is a gritty, emotional neo-noir about survival, consequence, and the desperate hope for second chances. It follows Raquel Pacheco, a queer Latina military veteran who's carrying the weight of trauma, a complicated past, and a dream she hasn't dared to fully chase—becoming a hip-hop producer.

Instead, she's stuck laundering money for a dangerous drug dealer and surviving a loveless relationship with his sister. But everything changes when she meets Veronica, a captivating singer who reignites something in her—hope, purpose, maybe even love. From there, things spiral fast, and Raquel finds herself making decisions that test her beliefs, her loyalty, and her sense of self.

Playing Raquel was personal for me. She's strong but haunted, calculating but vulnerable. She's not polished. She's raw. And through her, we get to explore what it means to live with trauma, make impossible choices, and still fight for a life that's truly yours.

**For anyone not in the know, not only do you deliver a stellar turn in *The Low End Theory* as an actress, but you also juggle the titles of co-writer and producer on the film; congrats! Was it difficult to wear so many proverbial hats on this production?**

Thank you! And yes... let me tell you, wearing all those hats? No joke.

Acting, producing, and co-writing this film was one of the most challenging—and most rewarding—experiences of my life. Each role demanded something different from me. As a writer, along with Francisco, I helped shape the bones of the story. As a producer, I had to fight to bring it to life—raise the money, help hire the team, manage the chaos. And as an actor, I had to let all of that go once the cameras rolled and fully step into Raquel's world.

And I did all of that while raising my son as a single mom. So yeah—there were moments I felt like I was holding the entire universe together with duct tape and prayer. But we made it.

What made the difference was the incredible team I had around me. I had people who stepped in and guided me through the parts of the process I didn't know yet, and others who stepped up to give me the space I needed to focus on the role. That support? That's what made it all possible.

It reminded me that women—especially single mothers—can do it all, but we don't have to do it alone. And I'm stronger for having walked through every phase of it, from first draft to final cut.

***The Low End Theory* is an official selection of the New York Latino Film Festival, NVISION Latino Film Festival (where it won 'Best Ensemble Cast'), and GuadaaLAjara Film Festival, all in 2024; congrats again! As someone so entrenched in the film creatively, how has it felt to receive such recognition from the industry?**

Thank you so much! Honestly, it's been incredibly humbling. When you're deep in the trenches of a project—especially one as personal and DIY as *The Low End Theory*—you're just hoping the story connects. You don't always know if the industry will "get it." So to be embraced by festivals like the New York Latino Film Festival, NVISION, and GuadaaLAjara? It's been surreal.

These aren't just accolades—they're affirmations. They say, our stories matter. Our communities, our identities, our truth—it's all being seen and valued.

And as someone who helped build this film from the inside out—writing, producing, and acting—it hits even harder. Every recognition feels like a "thank you" to the version of me who bet on this dream. And it's not just my win—it belongs to our entire cast and crew. The ensemble cast award especially meant so much, because this film was built on shared belief, trust, and



heart. We all came in hungry, with something to prove—not just to the industry, but to ourselves.

But the biggest moment for me? Seeing my son witness all of this. It has hit me harder than anything I could imagine.

**You have such a great cast assembled for *The Low End Theory*, including the likes of J.R. Villarreal, Philip Anthony-Rodriguez, and Rene Rosado. What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this amazing ensemble?**

Oh man, it was amazing! With the exception of Philip Anthony-Rodriguez, most of the cast are close friends of mine—so honestly, it felt like we were just playing the whole time. There was a real ease and trust on set that allowed us to push each other creatively.

We're always striving to work together because we challenge each other in the best ways—and more importantly, we feel safe enough to take big risks. That kind of dynamic isn't just rare—it's gold.

And working with Philip? He was incredible. So grounded, so intense. He embodied his role so fully that I barely had to act in our scenes—just react. It's such a gift to work with someone who brings that level of truth to the screen. I always say the dream is to make movies with your friends... and *The Low End Theory* made that dream a reality.

**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like not only being directed by phenomenal talent Francisco Ordonez, but also sharing the writing duties with him on *The Low End Theory*?**

Francisco and I go way back—it's very much like working with family. So much so that over the course of writing, producing, filming, and editing *The Low End Theory*, we both built families of our own.

Our creative partnership started over 20 years ago when I starred in his thesis film at Columbia University. Since then, we've collaborated on various projects because we know one thing for sure: when we show up for each other, it's always with our A-game. And as a director, Francisco is great to work with. He's incredibly thoughtful when it comes to character—he doesn't just direct, he discusses. He gives me the space to explore, to play, to really live inside the character. That kind of trust and collaboration makes all the difference. It's how we got Raquel to feel so layered and alive.

And the best part? After everything—the late nights, the stress, the rewrites, the budget stretches—we made it through a feature film together... and we're still family. That says it all.

**Can cinephiles look forward to seeing you take on more of a writing and producing role in film and television as you go forward? Is this something you want to continue to pursue?**

You know what? Yeah. Absolutely. Writing and producing weren't part of the original plan—at least not in the beginning—but they've become essential to how I express myself as a storyteller. *The Low End Theory* taught me that I don't need to wait for someone to hand me a role. I can create the story, shape the

world, and build the kind of narrative I want to see on screen.

And honestly? Storytelling behind the scenes hits different. It's where the real power is. You're not just interpreting someone else's vision—you're dreaming it up, molding it, building space for others. It's a whole different kind of magic. One that allows me to center characters and communities that usually get overlooked, and do it with heart, truth, and intention.

So yes—audiences will definitely be seeing more of me in writing and producing. I'm developing a gritty Western and a TV series full of crime, comedy, and chaos. At this point, I don't just want to perform in stories—I want to own the narrative.

**Can you give discerning fans a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to wit your upcoming bravura turn in the upcoming motion picture *Goldmine*?**

I'm going to keep it real... discerning fans may blink and miss me in *Goldmine*! I play a teeny tiny role as a nurse—like, two steps above a background actor, if we're being honest. But it was still special to me, because one of the writers/directors is a dear friend and actually served as the Assistant Director on *The Low End Theory*—so it felt like a full-circle creative moment.

But if you're looking for the full Sofia Yepes experience? Come see me on stage.

This June, I'll be performing in a hilarious, dark family satire called *I Hope You're Having Fun in Hell, Dad* at the Hollywood Fringe Festival. I play a drug-addicted stripper and terrible mother whose wealthy ex has

just died—and let's just say, chaos ensues. It's raw, ridiculous, and painfully real. Written and directed by the brilliant Adriana Martinez-Baron and led by the unstoppable Cinthya Carmona, this show is gonna be wild. And yes—fun as hell to perform.

**Your first credited work onscreen work came in the form of the 2005 short film *St. Paul*. Any special memories of this freshman production?**

Yes! *St. Paul* will always hold a special place in my heart. It was my very first audition—and to be honest, I almost didn't go. I was absolutely gripped by fear. The only reason I showed up was because my cousin was dating the star of the film at the time, and she made me go so she wouldn't look bad for recommending me. Otherwise? I probably would've bailed.

To make it even more chaotic, I showed up fully memorized—for the wrong character. I had about five minutes in the room to look over the correct sides... and somehow, I still booked it. That audition ended up being a huge turning point in my life.

It was also the day I met Francisco Ordoñez and Rene Rosado—two people who would become such important creative collaborators in my journey. Wild how the thing you almost skip ends up changing everything.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – *Living in Oblivion*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, *The Player* or *Swimming With Sharks*?**

Ha! *Once Upon A Time in Hollywood*, hands down.



Photo Credit : Ryan West Photo



# JULIA WACKENHEIM



**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed actress, writer, producer and director extraordinaire Julia Wackenheim; greetings and salutations Julia and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the celluloid Q&A pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Thank you for having me - it's a total honor! So far, 2025 has been a wild year. On a macro level the world has been on fire - literally in my hometown of Los Angeles, and globally it's been easy to get lost in what's wrong/scary/awful. But in my (micro) world, it's been a year of growth and exploration - with some whimsy sprinkled throughout.

**Major kudos and accolades on your recently wrapped pilot presentation for Ethel & Ernie which you wrote, directed and starred in! Though these are still early days in the life of Ethel & Ernie, can you give our ever-inquisitive readers a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with this series?**

That's so kind of you - thank you! This has been one of the best experiences in my life. I've had the honor to work with incredibly talented people, who all helped create a top-notch, fun, and productive set, with only a little (fake) blood spilt! Ethel & Ernie will evolve into a dynamic duo - they're like bacon and chocolate. It shouldn't work together, but somehow it really does. We'll see antics aplenty from Ethel, while we witness Ernie balance her family back in the Philippines and her job caring for Ethel.

**You've written another pilot prior to Ethel & Ernie entitled Whoa Nellie! What has the creative experience been like thus far with Ethel & Ernie versus Whoa Nellie!?**

Whoa Nellie was conceived from my time taking horse riding lessons during the pandemic - it was one of the only "safe" ways to get exercise. I loved the experience so much, I decided to pull a Taylor Sheridan and write a show set on a Kansas horse farm. Mostly so I could play with horsies... Both pilots were a ton of fun to write.

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates Ethel & Ernie from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 television landscape?**

It's a multi-cam featuring two leading women who are from demographics not typically seen on tv as leads: women over 65 and Filipino Americans.

**You've produced the short 2020 film Becoming Eddie, as well as thirteen episodes of the television series F'd. Is producing - as well as writing and directing - something which you hope to do much more of in the future?**

Absolutely! I love getting to create from the ground up - solving puzzles and working with other creatives to make TV - or believing in a project, like Becoming Eddie, and helping get it made.

**What's the status on Super Drunk Girl which you co-wrote, and which is now in development as a live action and animated series?**

Super Drunk Girl is a free agent and looking for a home to call her own!

**You're a longtime champion of Domestic Workers Rights and**

**Long-Term Healthcare. Can you talk about what inspired this well-placed advocacy?**

I first attended a social justice meeting for domestic workers' rights in 2012, I was shocked and horrified at how caregivers are being treated. Soon after, I found myself co-founding a grassroots interfaith coalition educating and advocating for domestic workers' rights. Everyone had a compelling story, because we're all touched by caregiving - needing it or giving it. After I gave birth to my son, I suddenly had my own story to tell.

Right now, approximately 10,000 people are turning 65 every day and we're living longer than ever. Most caregivers, about 80%, are family members, typically women, who have to give up everything in order to take care of their loved ones. Domestic workers are often taken advantage of by wage theft, unjust working conditions, trafficking, and oftentimes have to choose between their own health and their jobs. It's a crisis - but there are solutions.

It's a compelling issue for me, and one that can unite us, no matter our political leanings.

**Who are some of the folks both in and out of the entertainment industry who have inspired and informed your own pathway as an actress, writer, producer, and director?**

My aunts and uncles are Scottish; the storytelling gene runs very deep - as does comedy. (One holiday visit my auntie did a tight five on why "green beans are terrible" and the negatives of owning a cookbook. Nearly peed myself.) As a kid of the 80s, I grew up on sitcoms and Weird Al. As a kid, British shows melted my impressionable mind: Fawlty Towers, Blackadder, Are You Being Served?. Later, my brother and I would sneakily put on MTV (forbidden at our house) and watch The State - every cast member on that show is pure genius. My high school drama teacher, Chip Garrison (who's retiring this year! Kudos!!), changed my life. He took me under his wing and showed me how to put up a play - from sets, to audio, to choreography, to acting - he taught me so much. After moving to Los Angeles, I honed in on comedy and had some incredible teachers and colleagues; Craig Cackowski, Bob Dassie, Paul Vaillancourt, Mo Collins, Tami Sagher - the list is endless. Phoebe Waller-Bridge has inspired me tremendously, she wears all the hats, and with her vision creates hilariously tragic content.

**Your first credited work came in the form of the 2005 podcast series Ask a Ninja. Any special memories of that freshman production?**

That was such a fun gig! Douglas Sarine is a comic genius - after he saw me in a live comedy show "The Friday Forty" playing a character named, Bitsy McGee (an improv student that can only talk in bits), he came up with the idea for me to play the Ninja's niece. Do you ever have that thing where you go to a different country or part of the USA where the accent is totally different from your own? And then you start talking with a Scottish accent or keep saying "Y'all want some grits?!" Well, Douglas' ninja voice was so great I had a really hard time not talking in "ninja." Also, I got to put on a gui. That was pretty sweet.

**Final - SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies - Living in Oblivion, The Player, Swimming with Sharks, The Big Picture, Hollywood Shuffle or Barton Fink?**

Barton Fink. Hands down. Because: John Turturro.



# ANTHONY E. WILLIAMS



Photo credit: Jonny Marlow

**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor, writer, and producer Anthony E. Williams; greetings and salutations Anthony and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the proverbial celluloid Q&A pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

First, thanks for having me. It's been an exciting 2025 for myself and family, we are doing well.

**Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn opposite Teyana Taylor and Taraji P. Henson in Tyler Perry's Netflix feature *Straw* which is set to premiere this June 6th! Starting at the top, and for anyone not in the know, can you explain what *Straw* is about and how your character of Officer Dickson figures into the proceedings?**

Sure, *Straw* is about a single mother who life seems to never give a break to. And on this particular day she reaches her last straw. As Tyler says everyone knows a woman like this and if you don't you have lived a very privileged life.

Dickson plays the right-hand man of the police chief, played by Rockmond Dunbar. Anything the chief needs if it's information, communication or tactical commands he works through Dickson.

Often times in corporate America I find myself in the #2 spot, next to power and making the moves for the head of command. It's a luxury that comes from being known to get things done right the first time and with little to no explanation. I brought a lot of my worldly experience into the role.

**Did you know as soon as the script for *Straw* from writer/director Tyler Perry crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?**

For sure! I'm blessed for this to be my 3rd project with Tyler Perry Studios. The first two were TV shows but this film felt different. The scale of the project and it being a thriller spoke to me and after playing FBI agents and detectives on TV I was eager to take my authoritative roles to the big screen.

**What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops on the *Straw* set alongside such heavyweight actors as Taraji P. Henson, Sherri Shepherd, Teyana Taylor, Sinbad, Glynn Turman, Mike Merrill, Rockmond Dunbar, and Ashley Versher?**

Well, I would say I was well prepared. I had worked with Teyana previously on *HONEY: RISE UP AND DANCE* so there was a bit of a reunion on day one. I've



spent years watching Taraji from Baby Boy and Glynn in A different world so it was a joy to be on set. That being said we not only had a job to do but we had a story to tell in 4 days with one of the quickest and most efficient directors in the history of cinema. Mr. Perry doesn't do a lot of additional takes so I was focused on serving the script, project and character and to not hold up production. It was a humbling experience to share the screen with the greats.

**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like working with the nigh legendary Tyler Perry on Straw? Is Tyler what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

Tyler is a director who trust his actors to bring their own version to set. I have worked with him before on 'Sistas' and used my Groundlings training with some improv. He shoots very fast so if you are going to add something it needs to be believable. I'm glad I worked with TPS on Young Dylan and Sistas' prior to STRAW as it helped me be prepared for the pace and expectations.

**What's the E! True Hollywood Story on how you landed on the pathway to becoming such an accomplished actor? Is acting something which you've always had a passion for?**

Love E Hollywood stories so here we go lol. I grew up getting to watch movies as a treat for good grades and good behavior (which was rare). My mom would hand me the TV Guide and say, okay Tony go ahead and pick out two movies. My heart would race as I found what HBO/Showtime films I would indulge into. It was always an escape from my boring life in the Cleveland Suburb of Strongsville Ohio. I would sit cross-legged in my basement alone as the HBO theme song would play. Still gives me chills to this day.

One day I asked my father what he would have been had he not become a successful business man. I remember sitting in the back seat of his Mercedes next to my sister and he said, 'I would either have gone to law school and UNC Chapel Hill, or became an actor.' I knew I had a better chance of being on Law and Order than becoming a lawyer so I just shot my sister a look. She later graduated from UNC with a J.D. and now practices law, and if you check my IMDb you will see I'm FBI Agent Strick on Law & Order SVU. Can't make this stuff up.

The last 'straw' if you will, was after I graduated with my MBA. I was working for GE at the time in Virginia and told my wife how I wish I had gone into acting rather than business. My wife

gave me two very clear options. She advised I could either accept that I was a businessman or do something about this acting bug. However, she made it clear she had no interest in being married to a shoulda' coulda' woulda' type of person for the next 40 years.

Shortly after this conversation at 32 I started taking classes, booking independent films, and taking the Amtrak to NYC and signed with my first commercial agent.

**You're also the founder of WMZ Entertainment which was behind your award-winning TV pilot F.A.M.; congrats! How did WMZ Entertainment get started, what do you consider its biggest accomplishments to date, and where do you see it going in the future?**

I'm a big hip hop fan. Not just of the music but the story behind it. Jay-Z tells the story of how he couldn't get signed to a label so he started Rockefeller records. Back when I started acting, I couldn't book a plane ticket lol. So, I started WMZ Entertainment and wrote and produced my own TV Pilot F.A.M. I wanted a company focused on changing the narrative of black family stories one frame at a time.

F.A.M. is about my life story and the relationships between myself, my ex, my daughter and my wife. Its biggest success was that F.A.M. went on to be accepted into 50 film festivals and won 15 awards. I also received 4 best actor awards including one from Series Fest.

WMZ Entertainment holds all of my IP, I have several other pilots and feature films under that umbrella. In the future I plan to release more projects and star in many of them. With the success of TV and films like Straw I believe these projects will be well accepted in a way that they were not when I was somewhat an unknown entity.

**As we noted at the tip-top, when you're not turning the world on its ear with your beautiful acting, you're also a rightly lauded writer and producer. Do you have a preference among these talents and skills, or is it a case of apples and oranges?**

They blend in together. As a writer when I'm acting I know what to add to make it more real and what not to add that takes away from the story. As a producer I have much more empathy on set when there are issues, delays or when they need something different from me for 'post' meaning post production. Without these skills I would be a very different actor.

I love seeing my own stories come to light but at the end of the day I'm and actor and this has always been my focus and my dream.

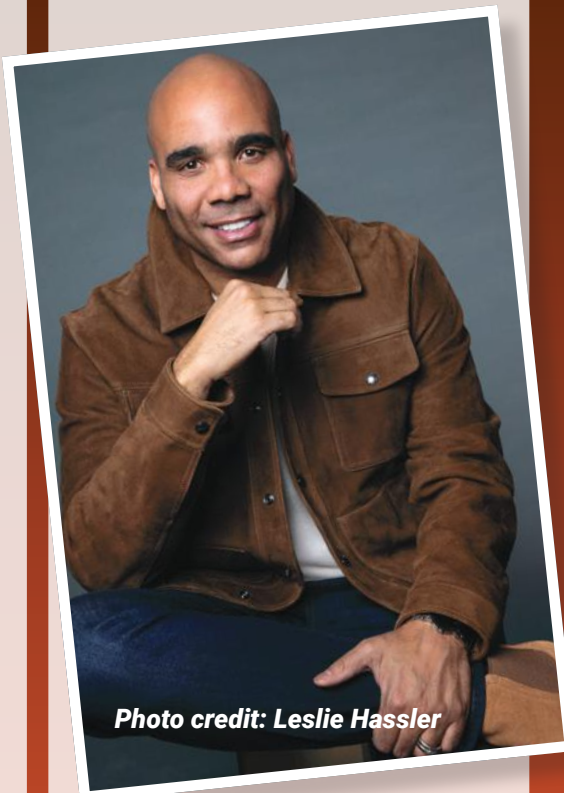
**Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of a 2013 episode of Southern Fried Homicide. Any special memories of this freshman production?**

OMG yes! I started out doing crime scene reenactments as many do. When you're non-union you have to get a reel together and this is the first step to doing it. Being able to call home to Strongsville or my family down in Ramseur NC and say 'I'm ON TV' was special. Then you realize there is music and narration all over your scenes and it's difficult if not impossible to put it in your reel to get an agent. It is very humbling but you have been on TV and it gets you ready for what could come next.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, The Player, Hollywood Shuffle, Barton Fink, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, or Bowfinger?**

Great question. My favorite movie about making movies is a film called HAV PLENTY. What I love about it is that it's independent. However, once they make the film they show famous actors at the premier for 30 seconds and it shows a movie with-in the movie which I love.

This was an inspiration for F.A.M. and my thought process that as Doc Brown says in Back to the Future, if you can put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything.



**Photo credit: Leslie Hassler**



We're very happy to have some time today with acclaimed multi-hyphenate writer, director, actor, and – WHEW! – producer Effie Spence; greetings and salutations Effie and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the Q&A celluloid pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

Whew is right! Thank you for having me! It's truly a privilege and grateful to be here. So far, 2025 has been wild! I spent quite a few years almost in cocoon mode and this seems to be the year that everything is just sort of exploding, in a good way. Of course, everything in this industry is kind of all or nothing so it kind of makes sense that everything is starting to come to fruition now, all at once. Same goes with my "tribe" here, it seems like all of us decided 2025 was the year we all weren't going to wait for the opportunities, we were just going to make them. My friends are all helming films or theatre productions, my husband's new jiu jitsu business (Waves Jiu Jitsu) is taking off, and am currently planning another trip to Greece to finish post production on my documentary, Motherlands.

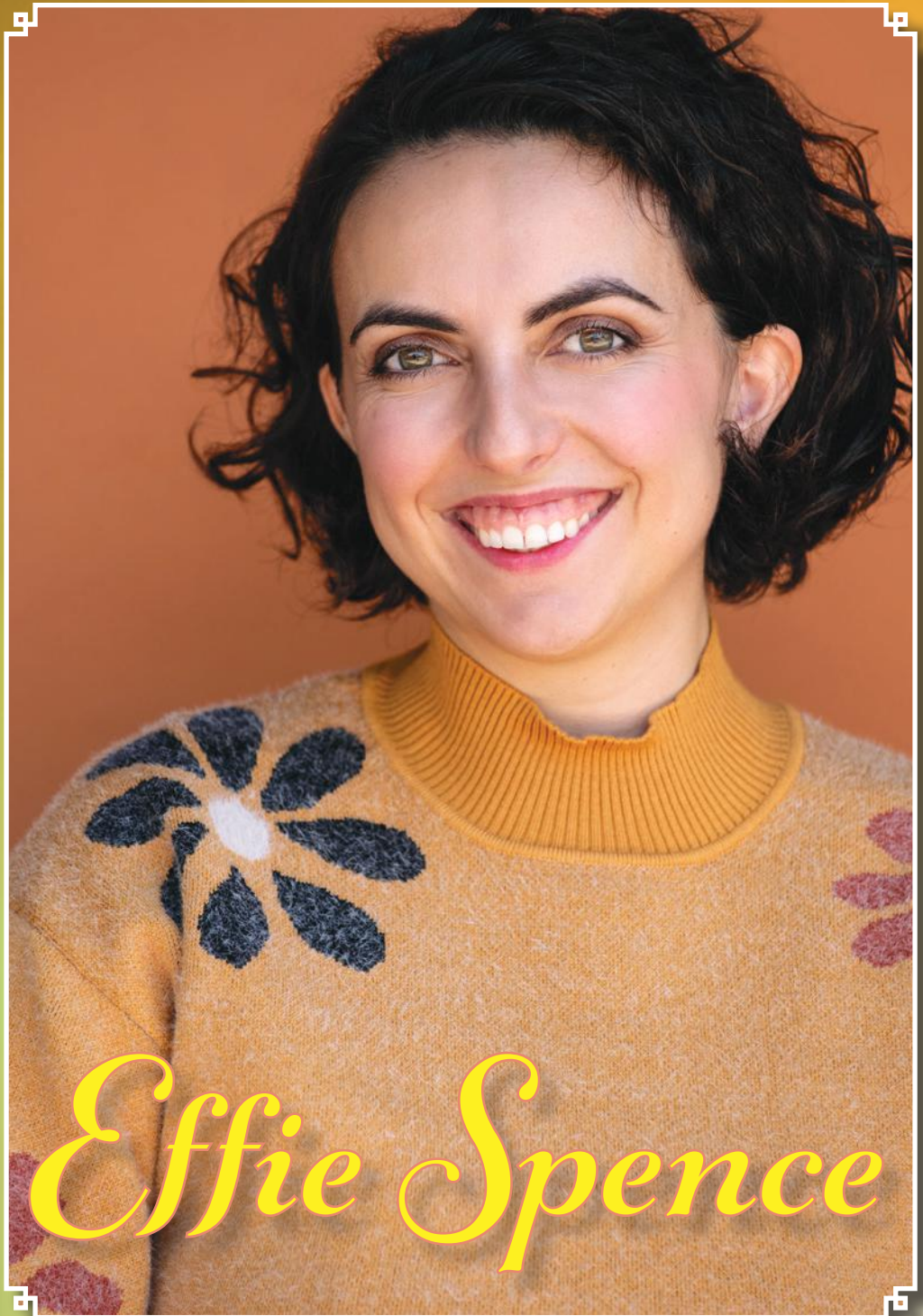
**Major kudos and accolades on no less than two shows from the LA Fringe Theatre Festival which features bravura turns from you, both of which land for lucky audiences this June! Starting at the top, what can you tell our ever-inquisitive readers about your rightly lauded one-woman show, Actorholics Anonymous?**

Actorholics' Anonymous is a one woman show based off of a scripted series that I have already written and this is my character's, "moment before." It's a satire and a love letter to what it's like to be an actor living in this City of Angels, the ups and downs, the addictive nature of waiting for just one more audition, and the ultimate journey of discovering that the best role you can play is yourself. My character, Emerald, has tried everything in the book to "make it" that she is left with her last option of doing nothing in the hopes that the universe will give her what she wants if she lets go, but therein lies the rub, to act means to do, but she is lost in the to be or not to be and falls into the traps of her addiction to acting. Oh, and it's a musical parody.

**The other venue which will spotlight your out-of-this-world acting is The Eddies and Pypers. Can you give us a hint or three as to what we can expect and look forward to with this production?**

Of course! It's written and directed by the incredibly talented, Jennifer Iacobino. I would say what audience can expect is a romcom with a twist. It's a classic boy meets girl, boy falls in love with girl, girl dies and then the play starts. It's a dark romcom for dark humored romantics. I have the pleasure and acting gymnastics of playing four different characters. In a similar fashion, this play is also the basis for a longer, scripted series.

**Hot on the heels of your turns in Actorholics Anonymous and The Eddies and Pypers, you have a very special July premiere for your new documentary series Motherlands which will be wowing audiences at various and sundry film festivals; congrats again! What's the story behind Motherlands? Is there an E! True**



**Hollywood Story you could share with us about this very special project?**

As part of what I am doing with Pixie Logic, I am doing a showcase of all Pixie Logic films this year as a way to showcase not just my own work, but the work of my peers, al fresco, including a director's cut of my documentary. I'm Greek American and really got my start as a filmmaker doing a feature length documentary with my grandfather in Greece called Waiting for His Hand. I was walking the streets of Athens and chanced upon multiple outdoor cinemas. It greatly inspired me, so this screening is an homage to that vibe of gathering the local community to celebrate work without all the red tape and rigmarole of

the usual festival run. Eventually, I want to create such a buzz that filmmakers actually get paid to screen their films, rather than pay for festivals. Mind you, we are going to do the usual festival route for Motherlands as well but this screening is really aimed at bringing a lot of eyes to up and coming artists. The story behind Motherlands began with that first documentary with my grandfather way back in 2021. I was always fascinated by his measuredness, his love of story telling and his incredible health at the age of 99. While filming that feature, I had this idea to do a longer series called Sea of Gold. I wanted it to be an experimental documentary series that highlighted the wisdom and lifestyle of the community of elders I so dearly love



from Greece. Fast forward a few years and many after many revisions, I was at a rock bottom in my life and career when I met my producer, Anna Engel. I kept honing on the messaging and meaning behind my travel series but nothing landed until I met my amazing producer at the most random get together in Pasadena with other incredible women in the performance, nonprofit and academic sectors. Anna Engel and I shared a little about ourselves and I just dumped on the group that I had this idea to go to Greece to capture wisdom through poetry, dance and interviews. Anna said, "Oh I'll produce that with you," and this is LA, so everyone says that but no one actually follows through. Well, she did. Fast-forward two months later and we are on our way to Greece, crowd-funded to get there, found an investor and found a DP at the last minute. My sister had a large part to play in the ultimate story, as well. Sea of Gold, the original concept, aimed at just capturing wisdom, but my sister asked me one day while I was pacing by the pool of my Burbank apartment, "Why not just focus on grandmothers and women? We deserve a show for ourselves," and so Motherlands was born. The entire concept finally solidified and we shot the pilot in October of last year. We are currently pitching it as a travel series where every season, a new host goes back to her mother's country to rediscover herself and her culture through the lens of the women that came before her. It is an opportunity to learn about culture through a matriarchal lens and offers guidance as to how we can live better. I'll keep you posted about E!

Proving that you're one of the busiest people in showbusiness, you also have a short film called *Le Petit Saint* making the rounds. What's the scoop on this much buzzed about short?

I don't know about busiest, Lady Gaga will always win that title, I think. *Le Petit Saint* is inspired by the life and works of Albertine Sarrazin, particularly her work *Astragal* that I read during a time I felt I made my own prison of working too many side gigs, prioritizing others and not making art. She was an incredible figure and author in the '60s in France, wrote her works during her prison sentences, escaped prison, broke her leg and met the love of her life, but she passed at only 29. This film is an homage to author and gives her a second lease at life through magical realism. I'm really proud of this one. It combines my love of cinema with my love of writing and is a nod to classic French films as well as draws inspiration from my favorite directors, Yorgos Lanthimos and Sofia Coppola. My goal is to screen it alongside the other films

**We'd love to hear anything and everything you'd like to ruminate on when it comes to your all in-one production house Pixie Logic. What inspired you to establish Pixie Logic?**

Pixie Logic was born spontaneously and has now become my home. Most of what I do is based on intuition, luck and magic because the name actually comes from me reading a sign incorrectly when I was driving around

Burbank thinking about what should I do with my life, as acting and waiting around for someone to discover me (ahem, Actoholics' Anonymous) and I read a sign that I thought read pixie logic, but in reality it actually read pixel logistics! So, I took the name and realized it couldn't have been a more perfect moniker. The mission underneath my production company is to lead artists to dream big and begin with wherever they're at and make the mundane magic. My ethos is to always hold the largest vision of a project and to move with intuition and see how life meets you when you're ready to meet and to have the logic of a pixie and just do it. It is a space for independent artist to create things that are really authentic, experimental, and encouraged. I have a great team around me and am very excited to show what we have made this year, alone.

**Word 'round industry campfire has it that you've got two feature films in the pipeline waiting to dazzle audiences: *Michael and Lucy's Bedtime*. What can we expect from these two upcoming turns?**

*Lucy's Bedtime* was one of my first roles that I ever received when I was living in Australia. It's a fantastical story about a little girl who gets to go on grand adventures with her recently passed father. I got to act in this shortly after my own father passed, so it is very near and dear to my heart. I am very honored to be a part of that production. However, both projects are a little bit under wraps so there's not much more I can say about them. For *Michael* at first, I was cast as a background look-a-like for Liza Minnelli but I took my no dialogue part seriously and studied her movements and mannerisms and so made an impression on production, so we might be seeing more of Liza than they originally slated. I can't say more than that but I am very excited she is back in the zeitgeist and that I got to represent her, I hope she just likes it!

**You directed and produced the 2023 short film *Lily White*. Is directing and producing something which we can expect more of from you in the future?**

Absolutely! I find that as a Virgo, I feel very safe in the director's chair. I equally love the control as much as I love being mama on set for everyone, intuiting what people need, and getting to play with the whole film, not just the acting. *Lily White* was my first foray into experimental filmmaking that I co-created with my creative partner, Stefani Rose Lah. I had this big epiphany when I was sitting in my house having another casual breakdown during the pandemic that I never actually acting school, but I went to Film school and it dawned on me that I truly love filmmaking. A huge inspiration for this piece was the works of Maya Deren. I was introduced to her in film school and have been chasing that level of greatness since. Directing has become kind of a mission for me as a female director because I want to really encourage other actresses and/or filmmakers to create things that are truly pleasing to themselves and flood the market. The first film I self directed myself as actress was *Bubble & Squeak*. It was meant to be a vanity project in that sense

that I wanted to subvert the male gaze and be over the top feminine. It was based off of the Greek play, *Lysistrata*, and the feedback that I immediately got from my male peers was to tell me it was a vanity project in a negative way and got scoffed at, but why is it not a vanity project for Bradley Cooper to star and write and direct in his own film? Then, I realized that phenomenal actress turned directors like Emerald Fennell and Greta Gerwig don't star in their own films and I want to be that actress turned director who does star in her own films in a really big way because we should be vain. Women are amazing.

**You have a new book of poetry on bookshelves even as we speak entitled *A Bloody Mess*; Congratulations! How did the book of poetry come about and is writing poetry something which you've done for a while now?**

Y'all did your research! I majored in English at UVM so writing has always been a go-to medium for me. Poetry was something that always fascinated me, my mom used to read us poetry from a young age, especially tongue twisters and limericks, so my love for rhythmic and lyrical language began early. This collection began as a personal practice, but as I got more brave with my work, I decided to publish it. I think everyone should write poetry. It is deeply cathartic and think most people would surprise themselves with the way poetry intuitively feeds whatever needs healing. *A Bloody Mess* is a collection of poems written during three menstrual cycles, all completely raw and unedited. It began as a personal practice, I had some complications with my cycle after getting an IUD removed, so poetry became a place where I could just get the PMS on the page and then found that writing during my heaviest day revealed things that needed either addressing, healing, or just purging. I decided to make the poems completely unedited as a statement. I feel like there is a lot of work to be done with breaking period taboos and honestly creating space for people who bleed to take time out of their week and as a society we should meet them there. I got really sick of tampon ads and such telling me to buy scented, barely noticeable, keep playing sports, and so I thought, nah, I'm going to make tea, put on the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* soundtrack and write some stream of consciousness poetry.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – *Living in Oblivion*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, *The Player*, *Barton Fink*, *Ed Wood*, or *The Big Picture*?**

Ed Wood all the way! I used to be huge a Tim Burton fan (no shade to his newer stuff) but *Big Fish* is one of the most titular films in my list of films that influenced me and Ed Wood is just the most campy, hilarious masterclass on the love of filmmaking. Johnny Depp's work is inspired and silly and profound. The underlying tone and lessons that I've learned in life is that life is really hard and the best way to move through it is through laughter, to recognize that it's surreal and ridiculous, and this film perfectly captures that.



# CHAPEL HART



**We're very happy to have some time today with acclaimed country music trio Chapel Hart; greetings and salutations gang and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we amble on down the Q&A musical pathway, could you all say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?**

(CH) Hello! From Sisters Danica & Devynn Hart and Trea Swindle, our first cousin.

**Major kudos and accolades on your crackling and electric take on the new Chapel Hart single Texas Hold 'Em which is lighting up record charts all across the ever-loving globe even as we speak, can you talk about what inspired the group to put your own unique and indelible spin on this tune?**

(CH) From the moment we met Home Free we knew we had to collaborate on SOMETHING together. Tim presented us with this opportunity and gave us the vision behind it

and it kind of just blossomed from there. This version of this song gives it an entirely different feel and we truly had a great time recording it.

**Devynn, Chapel Hart collaborated on Texas Hold 'Em with country music's only all-vocal band Home Free, joining forces to give audiophiles a true gem of a ditty! What was it like working alongside this out-of-this-world group?**

(Devynn) Working with Home Free was such a blast. They are insanely talented and genuinely good people, which made the whole process even better. From the very beginning there was this natural chemistry and mutual respect. We had so much fun playing around with the harmonies and bringing that foot stomping country energy to a Beyoncé track. It honestly felt like one big jam session with friends who just happen to be vocal magicians. We are so proud of how it turned out. It is bold, unexpected, and pure harmony magic.



**Trea, the music video for Texas Hold 'Em is inspired and one of the very best we've seen this year – Congrats! How involved was Chapel Hart in the overall look and feel of the music video?**

(Trea) Well, if you've ever seen Home Free in action, you already know that there was sure to be a fun filled atmosphere. Home Free selected the Mickey's Tavern as the location which was perfect place for us to just come and add a little Chapel Hart energy to the mix!! When there's that many awesome people in one place, there isn't much need for choreography and stuff. We just danced and had a great time and it's definitely translated beautifully to the video.

**Danica, who did the producing honors on Chapel Hart's Texas Hold 'Em single and what did the in-studio collaboration between artists and producer look like while fashioning and shaping this track?**

(Danica) Darren Rust! He did the engineering and production for this track and he was SO PHENOMENAL intertwining all those voices and parts! I believe Tim Foust is hands-on with production as well.

**Devynn, in the wake of the May 16 release of the new single Texas Hold 'Em, what does the touring/performing dance card look like for Chapel Hart? Where can fans see you all next?**

(Devynn) Our touring schedule is packed with performances that we're thrilled to bring to our fans. From intimate venues to major festivals, we're hitting the road to share our music and connect with audiences across the country and beyond.

**Trea, should fans keep eyes and ears on the lookout for even more music from Chapel Hart as the year marches forward, possibly in the form of an EP or LP release?**

(Trea) Absolutely!! We've been writing like madmen and in and out of the studio between shows. There's one song in particular that I haven't been able to get out of my head; so, to say I'm excited to share what we've been working on is an understatement!

**A question for all of you: Who inspires you both in and out of the world of music?**

(Danica) Garth Brooks in music, and I try and draw inspiration from connection! The people I meet and encounter and when I hear and learn their stories I usually end up being inspired and blown away!

(Devynn) Gretchen Wilson inspires me both in and out of music. I've always been so impressed with how she has managed to stay true to herself and her artistry throughout her career. She didn't change just because of the current trend. She is herself through and through every time.

(Trea) The Highway Men.

Although most people may see a "devil may care" attitude, or someone wanting to buck the system, they all wrote and sang songs that they believed in, despite what society says. When I think of them, I think of "Irma Jackson," "Ira Hayes," and "The Immigrant" and try to remember to keep a little bit of outlaw in everything that I do.

**Danica, how did Chapel Hart come together to form the country trio which we hear to such glorious effect on the new Texas Hold 'Em single?**

(Danica) It took a lot of family gatherings singing with our large family and building a country music career in New Orleans, and learning when the doors close in your face to say "surely this place has some windows and side doors."

**Devynn, at the end of the day what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to Chapel Hart's brilliant interpretation of Texas Hold 'Em?**

(Devynn) At the end of the day, I hope listeners walk away feeling like country music can be whatever it wants to be. That it can be bold, playful, powerful, and still rooted in storytelling. We had so much fun putting our spin on this song, and I hope that joy comes through in every note. I want people to feel empowered, energized, and proud to see different styles and voices coming together in a way that just works. Whether you're a die-hard country fan or brand new to the genre, I hope this version of "Texas Hold 'Em" makes you wanna dance, turn it up loud, and maybe see country through a new lens.





**Globally acclaimed alt-rock band Mother Mother just dropped their new single, "Love To Death."**

**The track paves the way for their highly anticipated tenth studio album, *Nostalgia*, out June 6**

**We chatted with lead vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter Ryan Guldemon about his creative process, the line between partial and total sobriety, and what it really means to stay authentic. (NOTE: This interview was slightly edited for standard grammar reasons.)**

**VENTS: What's your process for translating personal experiences into something abstract yet relatable?**

Ryan Guldemon: I guess the process would be to not try and do that. I think when I set out to, okay, I went through this or I feel this way or I have this opinion. Let's put it in the song.

It never goes well. I'm best off just picking up an instrument and just letting something through. And if it's good, then I'll pursue it. And if it's not, I'll move on to the next thing. But I don't premeditate any songwriting.

**VENTS: So you don't really overthink it, in other words, really.**

Ryan Guldemon: Not the, like, conception stage. Maybe once a song is up on its feet, then you can certainly get very thoughtful about how to best bring it to life. Like, I toil over lyrics, but I don't toil over, like, what it means, what it's about. Like, that needs to present itself clearly, without me getting in the way.

And then once the theme is born from who knows where or who knows how, then I'll, like, okay. How can I really make this as compelling as possible? Like, should it be this word? Should it be that rhyme? Should it have this type of bridge?

Should the chorus repeat? Like, all the architectural stuff, that is where I get, like, pretty heady.

# Mother Mother

## Host of the Month

### MOTHER MOTHER'S EVOLUTION

**VENTS: How has your relationship with songwriting evolved from your earlier work? And what's harder now and what and what comes easier for you?**

Ryan Guldemon: I think I have a bit of a return to form these days with doing things more instinctually and more intuitively and, like, less thoughtfully, like we just discussed. And I feel like that's how we create when we're first starting out when we are young, but we're unwitting to it. Like, we don't realize that we are channeling. We don't think of it like that way. We're just so excited to be acquainting ourselves with this new medium.

It's so fun. It's so new. It's so exciting. Things just happen naturally. And then the deeper you get into it, you start to meddle with your brain, and you start to worry.

You start to think about how to make this more effective or more viable, and I find that's when the spirit becomes, dulled and sanitized. And so I went through that. You know, I've been doing this a long time. Now I'm on the other side, and I think songwriting is the most pure and instinctive and, you know, dare I say, spiritual now. For me, it's really this realm in which I feel very connected to things beyond my understanding, things beyond my own little identity structure, and it gives me this feeling of reverence for life, for, consciousness.

And I'm sure that was all happening at the beginning. I just wasn't thinking about it. Like, that's the beauty of being young. You don't think about that stuff. You just embody it naturally.

But now I think about it, and then I try my best to nurture that energy.

**VENTS: Mother Mother has had a major resurgence thanks to platforms like TikTok. How has that affected your sense of artistic identity or the way you approach new music? Has it altered your style at all?**

Ryan Guldemon: I think it's helped us return to what is our most authentic style. It would be very different if the songs that blew up on TikTok were, like, our radio hits. That would be such a different story arc, but, in fact, they were the songs that were more quirky, that were less viable, that were less commercial, which is a great gift. It was like, what people actually want is when you're just being yourself, which so happens to be a little outside of the box. And so that was like, oh, right.

Of course. Like, that music was the most pure and authentic. Of course, that's the music that is being celebrated. And so it was a revelation, in returning to form. Sure.

### RYAN GULDEMOND ON SOBRIETY

**VENTS: So, you've been open about your personal growth and sobriety. How has that shaped your creativity and the way you lead the band?**

Ryan Guldemon: Yeah. It's funny. Like, I was talking about this the other day. And for the record, like, I'm not sober. You know, I had a very destructive and [debauched] lifestyle up until a moment of clarity, as they say, and I took a year off of everything.



So I had a year of sobriety, and that birthed just a whole new way of living. And on the other side of that year was, you know, a much more moderate and cautious lifestyle. And I realized that I wasn't addicted to the substance so much as the escape that it provided from things I didn't like about myself. And so when you have the space and the clarity to go within and address those things that you don't like about yourself, you can heal that part of you. And then coming out a little more healed, you don't crave the substance to escape from a thing that is healed.

You know what I mean? So, yeah, after that big life shift in that year, I don't really have a problem with drinking and stuff. It's like here and there, you know Yeah. A drink or two, you know, special occasion. But I will say that when I first, you know, got sober, I threw the baby out with the bathwater in terms of certain writing sensibilities.

Because a lot of the early stuff was, like, dark and twisted and had a lot of, like, angst and torment in it. And I saw that as being a defect of my lifestyle, like an unsavory byproduct of the way that I was living. And so I began writing much more about the healing journey and much more about positive things, I guess. And then I realized I missed all that torment, all that darkness in the writing, and that it's really cool, that stuff. And society kind of brings that out anyway.

Doesn't necessarily reflect per the viewer. There is some good stuff in the world for sure. Yeah. And I think you can draw upon that part of you without it being, the part of you that is in the driver's seat of your actual life. Like, the creative realm is a place where we can indulge in our darkness and our insanity.

And so I realized that I was resisting that in the wake of my so called sobriety to the detriment of the writing. And so and now I'm like, okay. Cool. Like, It can be a level headed, grounded, relatively sober person in reality. And in the writing, I can get demented, and that's cool.

Those things are not mutually exclusive.

#### **DOES MOTHER MOTHER HAVE A CORE SOUND?**

**VENTS: The band sound shifted quite a bit over the years...So do you think there's a core Mother Mother sound, or is evolution sort of part of the identity or the journey?**

Ryan Guldemon: I think there's a core set of sensibilities within the songwriting, but the production, I think, is what has changed and varied the most. I think you could probably sit down at a piano and play any song from any album in a set, and it would work together. It would feel like the same person.

But it's how we've adorned the music in production that I think has made the biggest, like, drastic sweeps.

**VENTS: Did do you write more from a place of catharsis, curiosity, or control? What would you say about that?**

Ryan Guldemon: So it's more about curiosity...And catharsis. Like, there's certainly something very healing and there like, when I'm into something that I love, that feels like a worthy piece of music, [it's like] my cells change. Like, I can feel it in my body. I can see it in my eyes, and so can other people?

I just heard this thing the other day that, like, unused creativity isn't benign. It metastasizes. And I really, like, dug that concept. Because when I am too caught up with all, like, the logistics of life and adulting and stuff, and my craft and creative practice is put to the side a bit. I kinda go a bit gray.

My aura goes pretty dark, and I get sad and flat. And then when I'm really into the muck of the creativity, like, everything just brightens right up. It's like, really, it's a palpable opening that I feel.

**VENTS: So are there any songs in your discography that you don't think really got the attention that they should have? That seems like a common phenomenon for most musicians.**

Ryan Guldemon: I don't know if that's for us to say. Like, I think you need to move on to the next unborn song once you set the written one free into the world. And it could take two weeks or it could take two hundred years before people find it. Sure.

That's sort of my philosophy. Because I think if you, like, have an opinion about a song's worth and a song's reception, then you're setting yourself up for grave disappointment.

#### **COMMERCIAL EXPECTATIONS VS. CREATIVE FREEDOM**

**VENTS: And, how do you navigate the tension between commercial expectations and creative freedom? You know, that's, I think you kind of hinted at that earlier, but I think there's a little bit more to explore with that question.**

Ryan Guldemon: I think now we just choose not to struggle with that. We have in the

past, and now the only reason to make a decision creatively is to make it feel better for you, the writer, the artist, the band, and not to make it more compelling for the audience.

**VENTS: What's something in the music industry you think most people, either fans or fellow artists, don't really understand?**

Ryan Guldemon: ...Fellow artists probably understand a lot. Maybe people that are interested in getting into the business, probably don't understand a lot. I think I'm trying to look back to what I thought it was gonna be like and the ways in which I was shocked. I can't even remember. My relationship with, like, first writing songs and getting really excited about sharing them with the world and having some career just kinda, like, form itself around that pure, innocent excitement was really strong.

I was just so excited about, like, okay. Like, if I feel this charged about this stuff, And if those 20 people in that coffee shop at the open mic we just played stopped talking and listened with their eyes lit up, then, of course, this is just gonna somehow manifest into a really beautiful, long standing career of some variety. That was my intuition.

And I think I probably just thought it was all gonna be really sweet and lovely and pure because that was the relationship I was having with the music. And then you get into it, and you just, you know, you realize there's just so much darkness and corruption and personality defect in the music industry, in the world, but in the music industry.

Especially in the arts, entertainment business. And so maybe I just didn't expect for that pool of innocence and sweetness and delight to be polluted, to be to be so challenged the more I connected with the industry and the business of things.





# Fleetwood Kelly



**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed and genre-smashing music artist Fleetwood Kelly; greetings and salutations and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Not going to lie...2025 had a rough start. I felt like I couldn't catch my breath the first couple months. The one thing that really kept me sane though was my music. I spent almost every weekend from January to March in the studio. It was my own form of therapy.

**Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted new Queer anthem for Pride, Summer Hymnal which features the ever-amazing CeCe Peniston and which is lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe even as we speak! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired this gem of a ditty?**

I was inspired by the sound of 90s house and dance music. Something fun and upbeat, yet still powerful. "Summer Hymnal" started as a feeling and grew into an anthem as we were writing it. I wanted to write a song that celebrates those who are different and welcomes them to a place where they can dance and be surrounded by those who love and accept them.

**Who did the producing honors on Summer Hymnal and what did the in-studio collaboration between artists and producer look like while fashioning and shaping the new track?**

My producer Austin Foley (aka Jynjo) wrote and produced this track with me. We've been collaborating since my first album "Just Happy to Be Here." With this new music, we wrote together from the ground up. We spent a couple months last year exploring new sounds in the studio and wrote a lot of new songs. "Summer Hymnal" is just one of many songs that we're excited to share in the future.





**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like working alongside CeCe Peniston on the Summer Hymnal single?**

Collaborating with an icon like CeCe Peniston is a dream come true. We began writing this song inspired by her music and felt like it made perfect sense to have her on the track. The biggest thing I've learned in my career so far is that you have to ask for what you want. We reached out to CeCe's team, she loved the demo, and the rest is history.

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates Summer Hymnal from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music landscape?**

"Summer Hymnal" is both nostalgic and new. While it pays homage to the dancefloor hits of 90s house, it also feels quite fresh in its production. I also think a lot of pop music today is quite subtle...in terms of sound, vocals, lyrics, etc. I would love to see big pop anthems rise to the top of the charts again. Artists like Lady Gaga and Charli XCX have been leading the charge for years, so I'm excited to put out this new music which is bold and unafraid to demand people get up and dance.

**In the wake of the release of Summer Hymnal, should audiophiles keep eyes and ears on the lookout for even more music from you as the year marches forward, possibly in the form of an EP or LP release?**

I won't say too much yet, but fans can definitely expect a lot more music from Fleetwood Kelly this year. "Summer Hymnal" is just the beginning.

**What does your touring/performing dance card look like in the coming weeks and months?**

I'll be debuting "Summer Hymnal" live at The Viper Room in Los Angeles on June 20th! Tickets are available for purchase through my website (fleetwoodkelly.com). If you're in LA, come through!

**Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have inspired your own pathway?**

Having just turned 31, I continue to look for inspiration in artists who found a breakthrough in their career in their 30s or later. Jessie Ware is killing it now more than ever with her last few releases. The late, great Leonard Cohen didn't release his first collection of songs until well into his 30s. I didn't start releasing my own music until my late 20s. Part of me wishes I had the courage and means to put music out earlier in my life, but the other part of me knows I needed to live some life before I found my voice.

**How is Summer Hymnal similar to some of your past music such as Hail Mary? How is it different?**

While the sound of "Summer Hymnal" (and my next project as a whole) defi-

nately differs from my past releases like "Hail Mary," I would say there is similarity in my lyricism and the narrative I'm telling with my music. With my last album, I explored my own journey as a queer person. This new music explores a different side of that journey – one that takes us to the dance floors of West Hollywood.

**10.) At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to your beautiful new single featuring CeCe Peniston, Summer Hymnal?**

I want listeners to walk away feeling a sense of joy and belonging after listening to this single. Music brings us together, and I hope this song helps me continue to find my audience.





*Cecilia Lee*





**We're so happy to have some time with you today, Cecilia, welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive in, how's 2025 been treating you so far?**

It's been a rollercoaster! But in an amazing way - I took a trip to New Zealand and Japan, and then hit the ground running working on some really cool projects since I've been back.

**First off, congratulations on your role in Fear Street: Prom Queen! It's the third chapter in Netflix's hit horror franchise and premieres May 23. For those who might not be familiar, can you give us a quick rundown of what Prom Queen is about, and tell us a bit about your character, Harmony LaFay?**

Prom Queen returns to the ill-fortuned town of Fear Street's iconic Shadyside, and is based on the R.L. Stine novel of the same name. Set in 1988, we follow underdog Lori Granger as she takes on the popular crowd in the race for prom queen - as the candidates start to disappear. Harmony LaFay is the ambitious school reporter who has her priorities straight: story always comes first. And when a story this juicy lands in her lap, you can bet she'll be all over it.

**When the script first came your way, did you know right away that this was something you wanted to be a part of? And were you a fan of the horror genre before joining the project?**

I absolutely knew right away! Getting to be even a small part of this incredible universe is a dream come true. I loved the idea of being in a period slasher, and the 80s were a GREAT time for the genre. Truth be told, I'm a total wuss when it comes to watching horror, but it's an absolute treat to make it. Matt, our incredible director, really made a point of doing everything as practically as he could. It's so fun experiencing the process of it all!

**You're part of such a strong ensemble in this film, working alongside talents like Ariana Greenblatt, Katherine Waterston, Lili Taylor, and Chris Klein. What was it like collaborating with this cast?**

First of all, huge props to the casting department! There was not a single misstep - everyone is so perfectly cast in their roles. From the youngest to the most seasoned actors, everyone brought their A-game with their talent and professionalism. Of course, it was incredible watching the veteran actors in their process, and really a lesson on how to lead a set. Special shout-out to our number 1, India, who despite being one of the youngest of the cast, led this film with remarkable fortitude, maturity, and grace. I also think that because we had such a young ensemble and we spent so much time filming in one location, the whole cast became so close. At the risk of sounding cliché, it felt like spending summer camp with friends (with a little extra blood and screaming)!

**The film was directed by Matt Palmer, whose work is always so distinct. What was your experience like working with him? Would you say he's one of those directors who really tunes into the actor's process?**

It was a joy working with Matt. He's so kind and sweet, and you really feel supported as an actor when you work with him. He also wasn't shy about expressing how much he was in our corner, and deeply believed in our ability to bring these characters to life! He had a clear vision for the project, and I think beautifully paid homage to the era to which this movie was a love letter.

**How does Prom Queen compare to the earlier Fear Street films, both in terms of tone and storytelling? What feels familiar, and what sets it apart?**

I think audiences can expect the same gritty and grounded setting and

characters they're used to seeing from Shadyside. However, this is very much a stand-alone movie that departs from the original trilogy and really returns to the classics of 80s slasher horror. It's campy, it's thrilling, and its needle-drops are to die for.

**Once Fear Street: Prom Queen premieres, what's next on your calendar? Any upcoming projects you're excited to share?**

Nothing I can talk about yet, but I have a certain sci-fi show scheduled to debut this winter that I'm very excited about. So keep your eyes peeled!

**What first sparked your interest in acting? Was there a moment or experience that made you realize this was what you wanted to do?**

Lord of the Rings. And/or Narnia. I'm a huge fantasy reader, and watching the BTS of those movies made me realize that it was possible to be a part of bringing these epic worlds to life.

**Are there any artists, actors or otherwise, who've really influenced your work or inspired you personally?**

Too many to fit here! But lately, I've been so captivated by Florence Pugh, in both a professional sense as well as who she seems to be as a person! All her work is so grounded and deeply human. And she seems like such a fun presence to be around!

**And to wrap on a fun note: what's your all-time favorite horror film—Rosemary's Baby, The Exorcist, The Haunting, It Follows, or The Others?**

The Others. I love a good twist!



A vintage photograph of two men in a room. One man is standing in the background, looking to the left, wearing a black Carhartt jacket. The other man is sitting in the foreground on a metal chair with a cream-colored seat, looking towards the camera. He is wearing a dark jacket, dark pants, and white socks. A large, silver, circular GE fan is mounted on the wall behind them. The floor is dark and patterned. The title "VACATION MANOR" is overlaid in large, purple, stylized letters on the right side of the image.

# VACATION MANOR



**We're very excited to have some time today with rightly acclaimed indie-rock duo Vacation Manor; greetings and salutations gang and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you both say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?**

Hey everyone, this is Nathan Towles (guitarist, songwriter) and Cole Young (drummer, producer) from Vacation Manor. Thanks so much to Vents Magazine for having us and thanks for checking out this interview!

**Major kudos and accolades on the freshly-minted new EP Back To Town which is lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe even as we speak! Nathan, how critical of an inspiration were life milestones for the two of you such as a decade as a duo, fatherhood, and marriage in bringing the EP to life?**

Those were all at play in pretty significant ways as I started thinking about where to take songs lyrically. Celebrating ten years as a band had me in a reflective place thinking back on all of the seasons we've been through as a band, while becoming a father moved me to ask questions about the future while trying to stay present in a fleeting season. I think both of those things show up pretty strongly in the songs.

**Cole, both you and Nathan did the producing honors on the Back To Town EP; congrats! Can you talk about what the pros are in producing your own music? And what are the challenges?**

To me, the biggest "pro" is that you can be completely hands-on with the songs throughout the whole journey, and get things sounding and feeling just how you want them. It allows you to be completely uncompromising with the songs, and to only be done once you have that sense of completion and feel that you're leaving the song in the best place it can be. You absolutely can find that working with outside producers as well, and we have found that before when doing that, but this time around it was just amplified and we were able to take our time and get the songs to a point where we can listen back nonjudgmentally and just enjoy them for what they are.

However, that "pro" goes hand in hand with the biggest "con", which is that being the artist and producer AND trying to create with a sort of "no-compromises" approach takes a long time, and it can be hard to keep a clear and objective mind through that whole process. Some days things feel crystal clear and others not so much, but it's just part of the process when self-producing.

**Nathan, we're big admirers of the tune Damage Is Done which can be found front-and-center on the new Back To Town EP. What's the scoop on this gem of a ditty and how it came into being?**

Thanks for saying that - it's definitely up there in my favorites too. A few years ago our label had me go to Nashville to do a series of writing sessions and two of those days were with a writer named Trent Dabbs. On the first day, we got "Back to Town" and on the second day we got "Damage is Done." We quickly found that Trent and I spoke the same language and he was just an easy guy to open up to. I started telling him some of what my wife had been going through and that song was just the outcome of our conversation.

**Cole, in your humble opinion what differentiates the Back To Town EP from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?**

I would say the biggest thing is just the songwriting and decisions that we make. Everyone in 2025 is predominantly using the same equipment, using the same plug-ins when producing/ mixing, but if you're following your instincts and gut, that'll lead you to songs and productions that hopefully just feel very true to who you are and will naturally feel a bit different from other acts in your scene or artist community. For us, there's no sort of "silver bullet" that makes us unique and apart, we just try to make decisions and songs that excite us.

**Nathan, in the wake of the May 16 release of the stunning new Vacation Manor EP Back To Town, can fans look forward to catching you and Cole on the touring/performing circuit?**

We'll be announcing some more 2025 dates shortly, but for now, we've got a show at The Troubadour in Los Angeles on August 1st that we're really excited about!

**Cole, who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have informed and influenced the sound of Vacation Manor?**

Great question. For us, a lot of the time it'll be a particular song that Nathan and I will get hyper-fixated on, and then that might influence a whole project (or part of one).

To name a few, "Space Age Love Song" by Flock of Seagulls, "Goodbye" by The Sundays, "Long Distance Call" by Phoenix, all have influenced us deeply at one point or another.

Early on, bands like U.S. Royalty, Local Natives, Phoenix, and Wild Nothing were big influences as well. They were a big part of what we were listening to when forming our sound and band.

**Nathan, how is the Back To Town EP similar to such past music of Vacation Manor as Everything I Can't Say Out Loud? How is it different?**

I would say "Everything I Can't Say Out Loud" is maybe the closest comparison to this EP. Our process was a bit different on this one but they share a similar production philosophy and sparseness, and I think there's a patience about both of them.

**Cole, with the new EP now out and about in the world, should audiophiles keep eyes and ears on the lookout for even more music from Vacation Manor as the year marches forward, possibly in the form of an LP release?**

Yes, and yes!

**Nathan, at the end of the day what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to the new Vacation Manor EP, Back To Town?**

I think I just hope it proves to be a well-done and honest record that can be a companion to people. That's what my favorite records do.





CHAYNE



**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed alt-pop artist Chayne; greetings and salutations Chayne and thank you for taking time from a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Hellooo...! 2025 finds me slightly frazzled. I have exams, so loads of studying to do as well as all this pop music stuff.

**Major kudos and accolades on your lovely new single It's Gone, He's Gone which is lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe even as we speak! Starting at the top, can you talk a little about what inspired one of the very best new singles of '25?**

Thank youuu! I used to know someone who thought she'd met her soulmate and that he would turn her life around... he ended up pinning her against a wall with a blade to her throat! She was definitely better off without him...! And it just got me thinking how sometimes you're better on your own. Celebrate your freedom !!

**Your producer on It's Gone, He's Gone is none other than the highly respected Paul Thomson. What has it been like collaborating with one of the finest producers on the music scene?**

Ha! I don't think he would agree with that...but we work well together. He's old and into Motorhead and I'm young and into Bad Bunny and somehow we bring out the good in each other. However, I do often have to tell him how cringe some of his ideas are.

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates It's Gone, He's Gone from the Distinguished Competition on the current day music landscape?**

One of my big problems with current pop music is that it all sounds so polished and characterless. I know people expect a high level of production, but it ends up all sounding the same. And vocally, Billie Eilish has spawned a million sound-alikes, everyone does that breathy thing. I don't know, I just like the way my songs sound like they've been recorded in a home studio by a relic of the 90s (they have!!).

**Should eagle-eyed music aficionados keep eyes and ears on the lookout for even more music from you as the year marches forward?**

Yes! New single end of August (hopefully) and, with any luck, the complete album in the autumn. But there's no pressure. We just want to keep up a little momentum until I have more time to do that massive arena tour support with Dua Lipa...ha!

**In the wake of the release of It's Gone, He's Gone, what does your touring/performing dance card look like?**

It looks like the inside of a classroom in Perpignan, unfortunately! I'm stuck with school for a while yet, so no plans, I'm afraid.

**Who are some of the people both in and out of the world of music who have inspired you and the music which you create?**

I try to be my own person and I don't really have an "idol" that I want to copy. But... having said that, I can't help but be inspired by all the big pop girlies in the industry!

**You've lived and grown up in both England and Southern France. How do these seemingly disparate roots inform and influence you as an artist and as a person?**

I think that having both French and British culture has really helped me be more open minded, especially when it comes to music! Modern French hits are VERY different to English ones. Having both cultures has really widened my taste in music. And singing in French sounds GREAT...!

**As a singer and songwriter, which generally tends to strike first during the creative process – the lyrics or the music? Or is it a bit more freeform than all of that?**

I think it really depends and it's different for every song. My mind is like a radio I can't switch off! I've constantly got melodies and songs playing in my head.

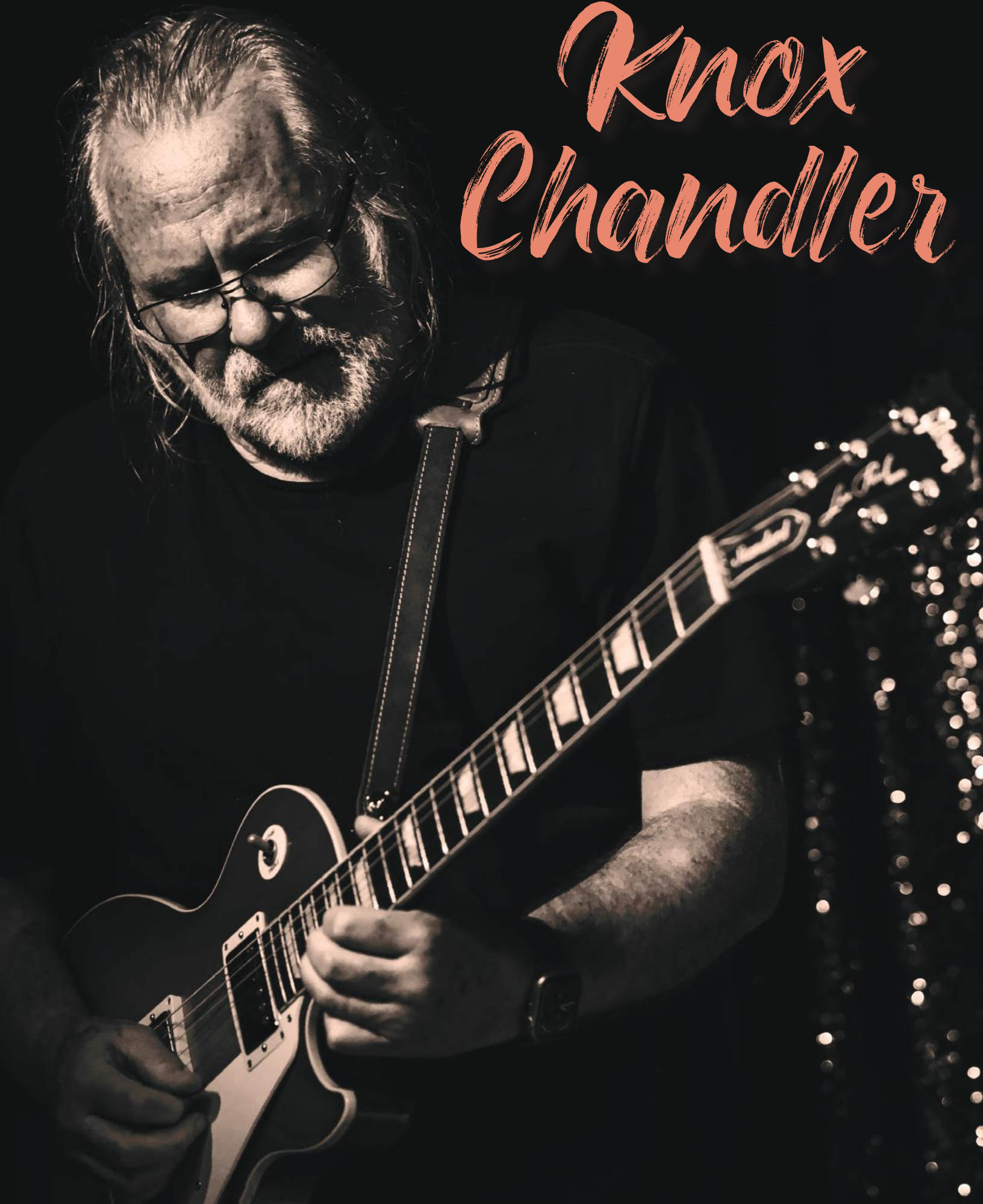
**Any final thoughts you might like to share with our ever-inquisitive readers about your new single It's Gone, He's Gone?**

IGHG was an attempt to write a pop song with only two chords. We can tick that box now. Next challenge, the one chord chart banger...! haha!!





# Knox Chandler





**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed musician, producer, arranger and painter Knox Chandler; greetings and salutations Knox and thanks for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Hello!!! This year so far has challenging, joyous, confusing, exciting, horrible and wonderful. So, I guess good?

**Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted solo debut LP The Sound which is set to light up record charts across the globe when it drops this May 30! Starting at the tip-top, can you talk about what inspired one of the best LP releases of '25?**

"One of the Best", that's very kind. What inspired The Sound is this shift in my intrinsic motivation. I had been living in major cities (NYC and Berlin) for over 40 years when I made a decision to move back to this old farm house to care for my elderly mother. That was three years ago. I was feeling really blocked creatively. I was so used to taking walks in the city and being flooded with inspiration from the streets. Smells, sounds, artwork on posters etc. Now I was walking around in the country and feeling nothing. I had arrived in the middle of winter and it was pretty but I just didn't connect. Spring came along and I decided that I was going to dive deep into fly fishing. I also started to discover the shoreline of this small Connecticut town that rests on Long Island Sound, The Sound. I began being flooded with inspiration, especially through the hours connecting to the water. My journaling, photography, artwork and music started flourishing. My mother moved into an assisted living residential home about a year ago and I found myself alone on this really beautiful farm. That's when I decided to compile all the music, art, and writings into a project that documents this urban to rural transformation of inspiration. A Musical Memoir. I also didn't want it to be in CD form, vinyl, or just streaming. I wanted something tangible. Halfway through the recording I realised it had to be a book. So the album is a book. The book The Sound has a download code and can be found at <https://knoxchandler.bandcamp.com/album/the-sound-2> As of May 30th it will be streaming on all major streaming sites.

Another point, is that I wanted to make a guitar album. This is my version of a guitar album. There are no synthesizers or samples. All the sounds are from guitar with me adding upright bass and percussion.

**As a well-respected producer in your own right, is it a safe bet to assume that you did the producing honors on The Sound? And, if so, what are the pros to serving as your own producer?**

I did produce the album myself as well as designing the book. I can think of a lot of cons but that would defeat the purpose. I really wanted to produce something that is my truth and only my voice. It is a very vulnerable position to finally put myself. I'm not hiding behind anyone else's art or compromising in any of my past collaborations. This is me in the moments I created it.

**We're big admirers of the tune Mars On Half Moon Rising which can be found front-and-center on the new The Sound LP and which also acted as the first single from the new album! What's the scoop behind this gem of a ditty?**

All the pieces on the album started with a Soundribbon except Mars on a Half Moon Rising. Soundribbons is a sonic fabric made in real time creating a paradoxical way — beyond genre or medium — of deconstructing and then enveloping and weaving together any series of individual pieces of music without any pre-existent audio or use of synths or samples.

"Mars" began with the recording of this symphony of frogs that I had recorded from this pond behind the house. I recorded about 5 minutes and was just blown away by the composition I was hearing. There was counterpoint and harmony. I listened over and over to it in awe. I then recorded a Soundribbon to it. The first take created this magic.

My dear friend Mars Williams had recently passed away and I was really feeling his loss, not only as a friend but as this genius musician. I picked up an acoustic guitar and just started playing this melody to the frogs and the soundribbon. It just flowed out. From there I added upright bass, percussion and electronic guitar. The piece pretty much shaped itself.

Mars passed away on a half moon.

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates The Sound LP from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?**

Oh I don't know. There is so much good music out there. I would say the one thing is, is that it's a book. The book has a page for each piece and credits as well as my paintings, sketches, writings and photos,

all done in a collage type style (similar to my recording technique), connecting to specific instances over the past three years.

**In the wake of the release of your stunning solo debut, can fans look forward to catching you on the touring/performing circuit?**

I will be going out at some point. I have been doing shows in Berlin and New Haven area but I'm pretty much dealing with getting my first release out.

**Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have informed and influenced your own indelible sounds?**

There are so many folks who have influenced me. However, on this album, I really tried to strip myself of musical influences and focus on the sounds and feelings I was connecting to while fishing, hiking and living in this rural setting.

**The Sound is being released on your new label Blue Elastic; congrats! What influenced your decision to create your own record label?**

I wanted to create my own niche and learn the process on all levels. There are other projects recorded and in the process of recording that fit under this umbrella that I call blue elastic. I'm sure I will make a lot of mistakes but they are my mistakes.

**What does your creative process generally tend to look like while working on new material? Is there rhyme and reason to the creative process, or is it a bit more freeform than all of that?**

I always carry around a little field recorder and I am recording birds or a bass line, chord progressions, riffs, water, wind, rhythms etc, but these days my pieces always start with a Soundribbon. I record these Soundribbons and listen to them over and over to see if they are speaking to me. If they are working I will then edit them, adding and subtracting, shaping them with extra instruments or additional Soundribbons. By then I know what the piece is going to be, reflecting on the initial concept.

**At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-listen to your bravura new LP The Sound?**

When it's good for me I get lost. I hope the listener is taken somewhere safely and gets lost. I just want them to experience my process of escape.



# Regina V. Cates



**What inspired you to write *The Real Conversation Jesus Wants Us to Have*—and why is now the right time to share this message?**

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, who was raised in a fundamentalist Christian church in the southern part of the United States in the 1960s, I know what it's like to be targeted as the "other."

We are living in an age of deep division, fear-based rhetoric, and the cruelty that comes from making an enemy of an "other." Observing our social interaction, politics, and the bastardization of Jesus' message of love your neighbor as yourself, I ask myself: What would Jesus actually say to us today? About being LGBTQIA+, gender inequity, white male heterosexual privilege, abortion, war, environmental destruction, Christian nationalism, greed, corruption, racism, prisons and war as a business model, the vilification of immigrants, education, and a free press, etc. I am positive he would call out those who are abusing power over people and harming their fellow human beings. He

would courageously exercise tough-love and offer real-world solutions. That is what I strive to do in this book.

*The Real Conversation Jesus Wants Us to Have* is my way of sitting down at the table with Jesus (a person we equate with radical inclusion, integrity, bravery, and love) to ask hard questions, and imagine solutions, about important issues we must face. The world is starving for spiritual conversations that are real and can help us heal. This book is the blueprint for how we can have the deep spiritual conversations necessary for us to be the positive change we want to see. It's not meant to change any fundamentalist Christian's mind. But if so, great! However, this book was written to strengthen the heart and activism of everyone who desires to be part of the solution to actually heal our world.

**2. Love, compassion, and radical inclusion are some of the most powerful and beautiful principles imaginable. Why do you think these seemingly simple concepts have been so difficult for many to embrace throughout history?**



Egocentric fear of difference is deeply rooted in all three Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. This was exactly what Jesus was responding to when he challenged the crowds around him to love their neighbors as themselves, but in contemporary society, this fear looks a lot more like viewing anyone or anything different as “the enemy”: Protestant vs. Catholic, White vs. Black and Brown, men vs. women, rich vs. poor, Republican vs. Democrat, Conservative vs. Liberal, heterosexual vs. LGBTQIA+, believer vs. non-believer.

Fear is never love. Love is brave, honest, compassionate, and requires us to dismantle shortsighted and self-centered ego, to step into someone else’s pain, to give up comfort with status quo, and to overcome our fear of difference. It’s our egocentric nature that blames someone else as “other.” Our selfish side isn’t interested in doing real soul-searching about how we treat people. That is why it’s hard for many people to find peace and satisfaction because real love, compassion, and radical inclusion threaten our ego’s need to be better than, more important than, richer and more powerful. We don’t need wealth, social status, or what is considered the right skin color or sexuality to love.

I believe it’s ironic that those of us considered “other” are the ones who can activate within us the levels of empathy and courage necessary to join together to actually be the solution.

**In your view, what makes this book especially relevant in today’s complex political and social climate?**

To find solutions that will actually change our world for the better, we must engage with one another in deep conversation about matters of importance to our survival as a human species.

Human history is filled with civilizations that have collapsed under the weight of political corruption, abuses of power, division, and greed. I wrote this book to say: Let’s pause, stop shouting at one another, and get brutally honest about the spiritual disconnection and emotional manipulation beneath all division.

Jesus lived in a time of political oppression, religious corruption, and cultural upheaval—and yet his message was crystal clear: love boldly, serve humbly, and speak truth even when it’s hard. That message is just as relevant now as it was then, and maybe more so.

Also we must be our own saviors. We must stop waiting for someone (president or particular political party) to save us from the seemingly never-ending list of challenges we face. This book is a how-to guide for how we can be our own saviors, both personally and collectively.

**Can you tell us about your personal faith journey and how it has shaped your message and mission?**

I was raised in a conservative Christian environment, but it didn’t take long to experience great tension between what I was being taught to believe and what I knew deep in my soul to be true.

As a young LGBTQIA+ person, I experienced deep pain, rejection, and shame. That is why

today I am not comfortable calling myself Christian because pain, rejection, and shame are still being dished out by those who say they love God and Jesus. I have walked away from institutionalized religious indoctrination altogether.

My faith isn’t about fitting into someone’s domineering and abusive belief system—it’s expressed by striving to live with love and integrity. And that’s the message I share with all who want to find their way to something more, too.

**The Real Conversation Jesus Wants Us to Have feels refreshingly different from a traditional religious book. Was it your intention from the start to reach readers who might shy away from more conventional religious texts?**

Absolutely! I desire to reach a different audience as this is not a religious text at all. It’s a social commentary that doesn’t preach. It’s a message that can connect us to one another.

Many people have been and are being hurt by religion. They’ve been told they’re not worthy, not welcome, not enough. I wanted to speak directly to them. We do not have to be religious, or Christian, or of any faith to live from our soul. But we must be willing to do much soul-searching by asking ourselves the very hard questions we need to ask ourselves.

Such as: “Since our body does hold trauma, does forced circumcision because of an ancient religious tradition cause some men to be angry since they did not have a choice over their own bodies?” Only by asking how we can grow and change our beliefs will we ever push past our comfort zones of sweeping issues like this under the rug. We must stop waiting for some savior to rescue us. We must be our own saviors. We must solve our own problems by working together instead of against one another.

**How does your own deep and enduring faith guide and influence your work, both in this book and beyond?**

My faith isn’t something I talk about trying to convince anyone to be like me. Through *Romancing Your Soul*, my podcasts, books, and Substack writings I display my faith by how I love, how I lead, how I respond to adversity. It doesn’t mean I always get it right—I don’t. But I keep coming back to the questions: Is this loving? Is this kind? Is this aligned with the values of integrity which I believe Jesus lived?

I imagine Jesus walking beside me to guide how I live and write. Not from a place of certainty, but from a place of trust. Trust that truth matters. Trust that love matters most and we are all here to love and be loved. We can make a positive difference and leave a legacy we are proud to remember; a legacy that will help other people and our planet as well.

**There are many thoughtful, well-researched books on faith, spirituality, and religion. What do you feel sets *The Real Conversation Jesus Wants Us to Have* apart from others in this space?**

There are many wonderful books that make you think. And there are books that make you

feel—and maybe even change. This book can quite possibly do all three.

I believe the most impactful part of this book is my willingness to tell the truth about myself—my fears, my ego, my missteps, and my growth. I don’t just present ideas—I lay bare my own journey. I talk about pain, trauma, doubt, and also joy, healing, and freedom. I share that being vulnerable and honest matters because it helps those who have experienced what I have, feel seen and heard.

This is not necessarily an easy book to read because it embraces our complexity. It offers suggested answers to many of today’s complicated issues. I believe people are hungry for someone who’s willing to stand in the mess with them and still say, love is possible, transformation is possible, and you are not alone. People are finding this book to be a breath of fresh air that empowers them to take action.

**Ultimately, what do you hope readers take away from reading your book? What lasting impact do you hope it has on their hearts and lives?**

I want people to be inspired and filled with a new determination about what we can do to improve our lives and the lives of other people as well. We cannot thrive in a world where there continues to be a selfish, me-first, and exclusion based mentality. We need each other and we must learn how to love one another.

I also want people to feel seen and know they are not alone. I want them to think deeply and to know their worth, inner power, and that they are capable of profound, soul-level love. I want readers to start book clubs, churches to begin discussions around the questions I ask, and for us to have on-line discussions, with me, where countless numbers of us address the issues I raise. I want us to come together and be inspired to be the positive change we want to see. My deepest prayer is that this book lights a path—not just to a faith in something greater than ourselves, but to wholeness.

# The Real Conversation Jesus Wants Us to Have



**Regina V. Cates**

Foreword by Paula Stone Williams



# The Égypte crew



*From left to right looking at the picture, Alix Van Aernam, Tanner Beard and Russell Quinn*



**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed Emmy-nominated director, writer, producer and actor Tanner Beard and his Égypte co-stars Russell Quinn and Alix Van Aernam; greetings and salutations and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the proverbial celluloid Q&A rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

RUSSELL QUINN: 2025 been great so far. Texan living and making movies. doesn't get any better.

ALIX VAN AERNAM: Lots of traveling for me, building some new companies and dabbling into some movie stuff with Tanner and Silver Sail Entertainment here and there, these are the real movie guys but it's fun to jump in there too.

**Major kudos and accolades on your groundbreaking and absolutely captivating new six-part series Égypte IV: Double Agenda which is entertaining audiences even as we speak! Can you talk about what inspired this cheeky short form series?**

TANNER BEARD: We'll Russell and I are cousins and have been making movies since we were teenagers but we were playing with the new iPhone during a film festival in France and when he, myself and Alix decided to travel around Europe due to a lost luggage incident, I think I kinda dove into some old habits haha.

ALIX VAN AERNAM: Yeah and what made it even more fun and absolutely crazy is there was no script, and no extra takes and Tanner would just tell me and Russ like "okay run over there, and your chasing him then take a phone call"

RUSSELL QUINN: And we would be at a restaurant, or hotel and we were just improving this story with Tan directing- it was a lot of fun and our trip started to evolve from vacations to now what are our characters going to do next lol.

**It feels inspired to have shot Égypte IV: Double Agenda entirely on iPhone 15 and it looks stunning. Was this an artistic choice, a choice out of financial necessity, or perhaps a little of both?**

TANNER BEARD: I was just really impressed with the cinematic mode, especially with a lot of light and it had this build in stabilizer and being a filmmaker in between projects I just kinda hit the ground running in testing it out.

**Can you talk about specific challenges the cast and crew faced over the couple of the two-year shoot of Égypte IV: Double Agenda?**

RUSSELL QUINN: well that was one special thing about this project is there was no cast and crew and for the most part was shot like a silent movie - and we had a Rule, no second takes.

ALIX VAN AERNAM- Tanner was just like, if we think about it, it's going to take the satire out of it, like this was just instinct and go once we kinda had an idea. We fixed a lot with voice over lol.

**Speaking of the amazing cast that you assembled for Égypte IV: Double Agenda, what was it like collaborating both in front of and behind the camera with the other on screen talent.**

TANNER BEARD: So a massive shout out to my friend and brilliant actress Katherine McNamara, I told her about how we've just been having so much fun making content around the world with zero script but how it would be nice to make it cohesive for an audience and actually shoot a little scripted stuff to help guide the audience through a series and she was just super awesome for coming on playing such a funny character but a pivotal part for us being to link all this madness together.

**Was it always in the cards that Égypte IV: Double Agenda was to be shot in ten different countries? Was that always baked into the story, or was it a happy accident?**

RUSSELL QUINN: Well Tanner and I had done a little something similar on a previous trip but with the use of Splice and the updates to the iPhone camera it inspired all three of us to shoot everywhere we went and see if it could play into ÉGYPT. So happy accident with some influence.

ALIX VAN AERNAM: We were on a trip to Canada with our girlfriend and we found ourselves running around shooting scenes, they would be rolling their eyes like "guys we're on a snow mobile tour" and of course we're shooting scenes.

**Can discerning pop culture hounds look forward to a possible sequel to Égypte IV: Double Agenda? Do you have other stories in mind which can fit into this particular universe?**

TANNER BEARD: Oh man wouldn't that

be fun- Dear, iPhone want to sponsor us and we'll continue testing how great your product is hahah. Maybe Speed Stick deodorant will want us to make a sequel, you'll know what I mean when ya watch it.

**Can you give our ever-inquisitive readers a hint or three as to what you have coming up both in the world of acting and directing? Do you have a pretty full dance card?**

ALIX: I'm working on some stuff for Buckit Ranch so stayed tuned for that but I do know Tanner's Just Be Claus is in the works and I'm on that production team. RUSS: I'm starring in a film called "One in a Million" based on a true story that Tanner is directing.

TANNER: Yeah, like Russ said we have that shooting soon but just finished up a movie out now called FLUXX and BLOOD BEHIND US and acting in a TV show that shoot in Fort Worth coming out in Nov.

**Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of entertainment who have inspired you?**

TANNER: aside from my dad and grandpa from the outside world, always loved the major athletes growing up but acting Val Kilmer was big for me and I think when I saw the making of Braveheart I want to make movies.

RUSSELL: Yeah I watched a lot of Van Dam movies and movies like Robo Cop are still classics to me but all the early action stuff. Terminator 2 may be my favorite film and like Tan, athletes growing up were very influencing.

ALIX: Always loved the comedies, I was in the military and I feel like I watched Dumb and Dumber 1000 times on DVD but I think on that more lol.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, The Player, Swimming with Sharks, Barton Fink, Ed Wood, The Big Picture or Hollywood Shuffle?**

Russell: anything Tim Burton did gets our vote

Tanner: Same!



# Dead Defined

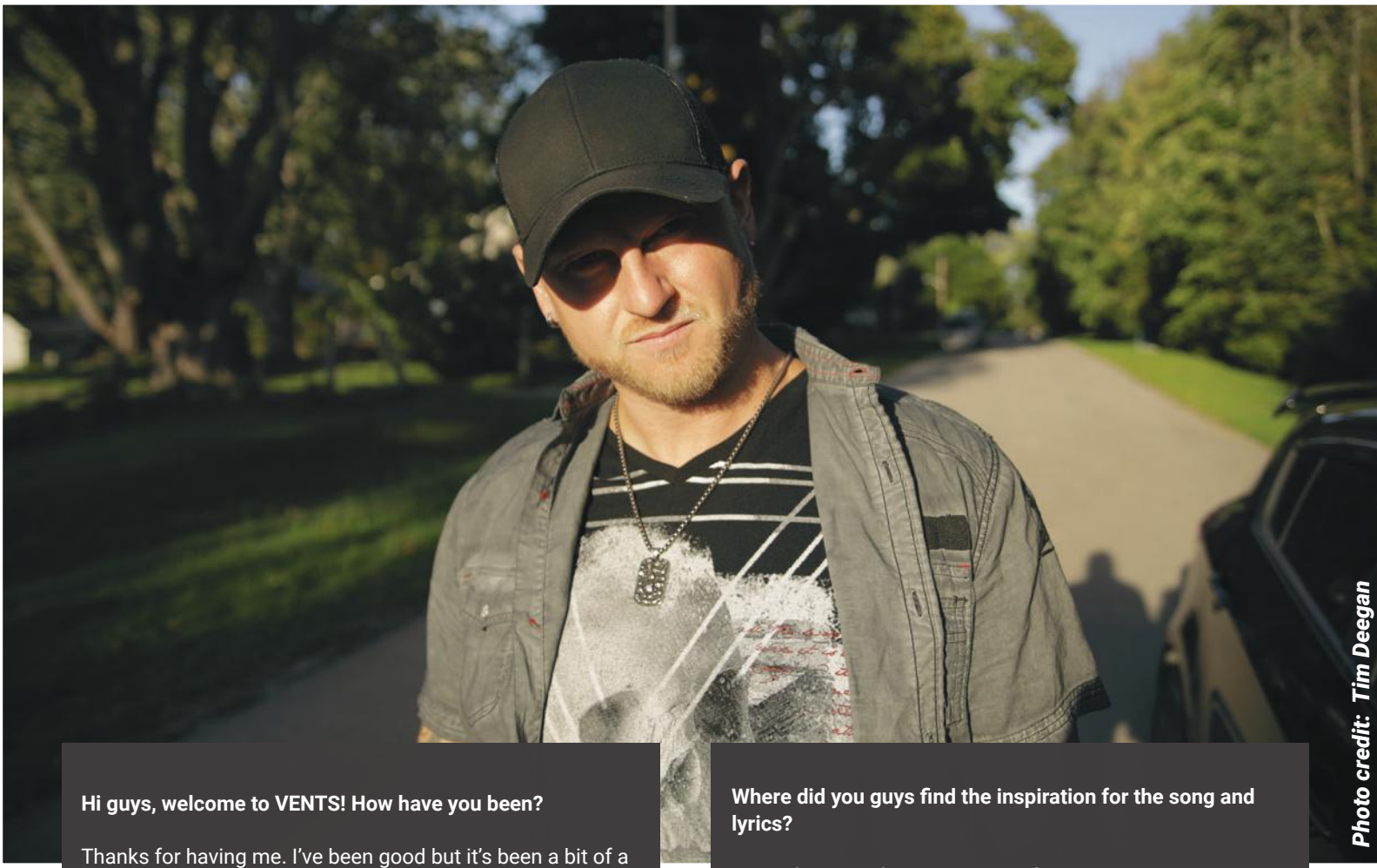


Photo credit: Tim Deegan

**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

Thanks for having me. I've been good but it's been a bit of a journey these past few years, personally and creatively. Life took me in a different direction for a while, but I've found my footing again. It feels good to be releasing music with a clear head and a full heart.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

The new single is called Better off Alone. It came from a place of emotional exhaustion — that point in a relationship where the truth finally spills out. It's not about being heartless, it's about honesty. Sometimes walking away is the healthiest thing you can do, even if it hurts. The title says it all.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

The process came together smoothly. I had a clear vision from the start, the message, the mood, the intensity I wanted to capture. Collaborating with one of Toronto's top rock producers helped bring that vision to life. We built the track around heavy guitars and layered elements to really amplify the emotion behind the lyrics.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

A lot of it came from personal reflection. I've been more private these days, more internal. The lyrics reflect that. They come from moments I've experienced, those late-night realizations when you're finally honest with yourself about a relationship, or even your own patterns. It's raw, but that's the only way I know how to write.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Right now, there are no solid plans for touring. I've taken a break from performing to focus on school, but I'm open to stepping back on stage when it feels right. I miss it. I just want to make sure it aligns with where I'm at personally and creatively.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

More music. I've got a handful of songs in the works, and Better off Alone is just the first piece. I'll be doing more interviews, sharing more of my story, and letting the music speak for itself. The pace is different these days, more intentional but I'm excited for what's next.

Thanks for the chat! Link to my Music/Video/Socials - <https://craigewan.fanlink.tv/DeadDefined>



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

Mik: Very good thank you. Flying the flag for industrial tinged gothic sleaze rock. Spreading the word for the new single.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

Tye: I'll try and adumbrate this without an essay, haha! So, like a lot of writers, I like catchy titles and I like titles that sum up the songs ideas, themes, lyrical content or general feel, I love it when a band can do both! No guts, no glory is obviously a commonly used and well known phrase, so putting a spin on those is always memorable and feels clever, there's the bonus of the alliteration too, which helps it flow and stick. Lyrically, the song explores aspects of social commentary and human nature but in a playful and self-aware sleaze sort of way, it's all rhinestones and bloodshed. I'm basically making a commentary on how the idea of celebrity and criminality can be equated as well as juxtaposed, the relationship and similarities between fame and infamy. The glam and American rock veins run through it as I use the entire backdrop of 80s/90s L.A. culture as a vessel for the message, on one hand you've got movie stars, Hollywood, glitz and glamour, then a mile down the road there's poverty, drugs and serial killers running rampant. These killers are kind of handed the same fame and attention as pop, rock and movie stars and I find it like a real life satire, and we're here for all of it, as humans we're drawn to tragedy, sex, death and anything sensational. I'm not saying we're all flawed or immoral, just pointing out some sardonic and ironic truths. It's the cycle performed by and requirements needed for things like the media to operate, like you'd see in a film like Nightcrawler, if you aren't killed in a sensational or provocative way, there's no memorability, no guts, no glamour.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

Mik: The project is two of us. I write the music and play all the instruments and Tye writes the lyrics and sings on them. We take inspiration from the great Industrial masters like Al Jourgensen and Trent Reznor so I spend a decent amount of time in front of the computer with my synths and guitars.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

Mik: The inspiration for the song comes from a few different things. If you could throw into a blender cult horror films by the likes of Dario Argento and Lucio Fulci, the Sunset Strip/Melrose LA scene of the late

# CRONETYE



80s and mix it with electronic synth and big guitar catchy chorus vocals. The film Maxxxine also had a big influence on me. I thought if I could make a closing song for that movie what would it sound like. Actually... by total coincidence Tye's lyrics would fit the storyline of the movie too.

Tye: Pretty much what Mik said and what I've said in my previous answer. Funnily enough, I've always thought it's basically a musical cornucopia of the themes in a film like Maxxxine with some more hair metal and DIY industrial thrown in, I actually wrote the lyrics and had the concept before that film even came out but they're very substantial. It definitely ties it all in nicely. We're like a bridge between glam bands and what Marilyn Manson was doing and saying in the 90s.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Mik: We currently don't have any live plans as we are mainly a recording project that releases singles. Maybe a video next and a new track. Never say never though. It's great to do press with magazines like Vents and help spread the word.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

Mik: I'm going to keep writing and recording

music and see what happens. As mentioned, a video would be great. Tye is in other bands so he is pretty busy. I'm always working on something whether it is guitar work or music production.

Tye: I'm always on the go with recording and playing shows with my band INHERITOR and have an album currently in the works with my band Demoralised as well as writing for several publications and myself, but this Crone Tye material is a very fun breath of fresh air that's familiar territory, but new enough that it allows me to explore as a musician.





# Teskey



Photo credit: CORI TESKEY

**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed rockin' Blues band extraordinaire, Teskey; greetings and salutations gang and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you all say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?**

Brandon Teskey: Hello, I'm Brandon. I play guitar and sing.  
Matt Baldwin: Matt here. I play Bass for Teskey  
Peter Murphy : I'm Peter Murphy. I play keyboard and sing backup vocals for Teskey. My background is in music education  
Brandon Gaddy: I play drums for Teskey

**Major kudos and accolades on the debut Teskey LP White Wolf which is lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe even as we speak! Brandon T., can you talk about what inspired one of the very best album releases of 2025?**

Brandon Teskey: Well, first off thank you for taking the time to speak with us, and very high praise, indeed. So, the creation of White Wolf started from a kind of a dark place. My former band, Until the Sun broke up, and my wife got diagnosed with cancer. So, a lot of those songs were written from a place of despair and are about an analysis of human nature and duplicity, as well as my wife's battle and ultimately recovery from cancer. As the songs developed, when we went to record them, we wanted to do it old school, laying it down live in the studio as a single performance, instead of layering tracks to a click. We wanted to create something new but had the feel and spirit of a classic rock or 60's blues rock album.

**Matt, Teskey's very own Brandon Teskey along with Larry Elyea, and Tony Noyes (who also contributed backing vocals on the album)**

**did the producing honors on the White Wolf album! What was it like working alongside this triumvirate of raw talent as you all worked with the same goal in mind – to create a beautiful and substantive album?**

Peter Murphy also did some of the backup vocals as well, as did Brandon Teskey's children. It was a great experience, because we were all working to create an album that was more than a collection of songs but a work of art that we hope is lasting.

**Peter, we're big admirers of the tune Beneath the Tupelo which stands front-and-center on the debut LP White Wolf. What's the scoop on this gem of a ditty and how it came into being?**

Peter: Beneath the Tupelo is a great track for sure. It started out as an acoustic track with just guitar and light drumming. Brandon got the lyrics/story from a news article about a man who muttered his family. The tupelo tree is found in the swamps of Louisiana.

When I joined the group, it was a new song that Brandon was introducing, and each of us were trying different sounds and styles to accompany his guitar and vocals. I started using an electric piano to play the same arpeggio as the guitar, but Brandon was going for more of a psychedelic sound. That's when I switched to using an orchestra synth with a wah pedal. It really did give it a trippy sound that goes well with the rest of the track.

Another fun note is that the rest of us heard a hard time remembering the name of the song when we were rehearsing it. As a result, Matt started calling it "Man the Torpedos", which then I started to joking call "Damn the Torpedoes" referencing Admiral Farragut in the battle of Mobile Bay during the Civil War.



**Brandon G., in your humble opinion what differentiates the White Wolf LP from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?**

Brandon Gaddy: I think the musicianship and songwriting take you into another level to be something awesome & great. I don't think this record sounds like what others are doing. Music is not a competition at the end of the day. White Wolf has a pallet of variety for an audience to feel something instead of just listening. This record wasn't a copy and paste in pro tools. I believe we are doing our own thing out here. We all have different backgrounds of music of 30 years of individuals having many styles and influences. White Wolf LP has something for everyone no matter what age. I think we showcased on this record old school but all new school ways too as far as the modern feel. There is no comparison to anything out here in 2025. We are trying are best to be at our best, to put out the best product we can achieve, otherwise, it's not worth it at the end of the day. We have gotten so much positive responses of people listening so far, and I hope that continues, and I hope we leave a musical stamp on the music to withstand the test of time.

**A question for everyone: Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have inspired your own distinct pathway in life?**

**Brandon Teskey: As far as how to live my life, my parents and grandparents had the most profound effect as far as that's concerned. As far as musically, as a guitarist, definitely Hendrix, Cream era Clapton, Scott Henderson, David Gilmour, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Johnson, B.B. King, Jeff Beck, Robbin Ford, Jimmy Page, Wes Montgomery, Django Reinhardt and the list goes on. As far as a lyricist I love the writers who can tell a story with their music, how Bob Dylan could in the 60's, or Bruce Springsteen did in the 70's and even Jimi Hendrix could with songs like Castles Made of Sand. I love the Beatles and a lot of newer Alternative rock bands too.**

Peter: My parents were a huge influence on my life and as a musician. My father sang and acted in a local theater and my mother played oboe and the baroque recorder. My mother home-schooled all 8 of us, which included our music education. I got my love and appreciation of music from my parents. Growing up, I heard so many kinds of music. My father listened to New Orleans big-band jazz as well as Afro-Latin jazz, and my mother who grew up in Detroit played a lot of Motown, artists like Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin as well as gospel singers like Mahalia Jackson, other R&B singers like Dionne Warwick, bands like Chicago, the Moody Blues, CSNY, and the Beatles. Another huge influence in my music life was my first core Director Linda Berg. She was the director of Opera Idaho Children's Chorus which is attached to the Opera Company. She opened my eyes to so much beautiful music and taught me so much about performing and singing. She, as well as my high school choir director, Dr. Jeff Davis, are the reason why I wanted to become a music teacher. Sadly, Linda Berg passed away in 2015 after a long battle with cancer.

Matt: I'm a fan of Donald Duck Dunn

Brandon Gaddy: my influences include Morgan Rose, David Silveria, Raymond Herrera, Mercedes Lander, Lars Ulrich, Tommy Lee, Danny Carey, Mike Bordin, Josh Freeze, Jimmy Degrosso, Samantha Maloney, R.J. Herrera

**Brandon T., in the wake of the May 30 debut of Teskey's debut album White Wolf, can fans look forward to catching the band on the touring/performing circuit?**

We do have shows in California, Arizona and we are planning some shows in Texas as well. We just booked the Woodstock Blues Festival, and hope to do some more touring soon. All our shows are up on the website and we will be adding out touring scheduled to it soon.

**Matt, how did Teskey come together to form the tight and harmonious band which we hear to such amazing effect on the album White Wolf? Is there a VH1-Behind the Music origin story you could share with readers?**

So, Brandon Teskey and Gaddy started 'Teskey' initially with the bassist of Until the Sun. He had some major health problems though, and had to stop doing music at the time. So, I stepped in and it changed the dynamic of the sound. It became much more hard hitting. After that, Peter Murphy joined. We do have some film of the behind the scenes, making of the album that we might release one day.

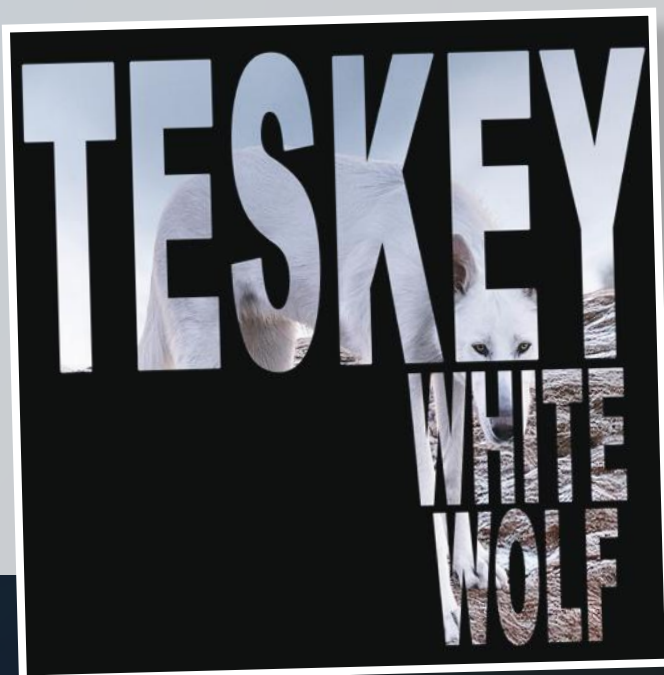
**Peter, Teskey hails from the great and beautiful state of Arizona. How do those specific roots inform the sound and energy which the band brings to its music?**

Peter I did not grow up in Arizona, but I can tell you that music influences form each of us helped shape our album from pop, R&B, Rock, Metal, Jazz, Latin, Barbershop, Blues, and yes even Banda and Mariachi.

I had a great time making this album with Matt, Gaddy (we call our drummer Brandon Gaddy "Gaddy" to avoid confusion and we call Brandon Teskey "Brandon") and Brandon. The great part of it was that we all had distant ideas and brought different ideas and flavors to the music. We bonded ideas of each other, tried different sounds and experimented. So many of the songs were drastically different from the start. Hearing some of the original scratch recordings or early takes/mixes compared to our released album shows how we came together as a band in a fairly short period of time. I only joined a little under a year better the release of the album. A few Under the Sun and Upside Down World had been almost fully recorded with others in the beginning stages. Each of us put something into the song.

**Brandon G., at the end of the day what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-listen to the stunning debut album from Teskey, White Wolf?**

I hope listeners share our music, come to the shows & tell all their friends about. I hope the music touches people in their hearts and souls. I hope people keep listening to our songs daily. I hope these songs save someone in their life. I hope that people are still listening jamming our record for their kids to enjoy as well. I hope our music inspires others in a creative and positive ways. We are thankful and blessed our gifts can reach so many people around the world.





# The Lowcocks



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

We've been great - and we're so glad to be here!

We are having so much fun working on our newest EP and our new album, and are in the process of releasing new songs this spring, all as part of our upcoming "Forgotten" EP, scheduled for full release on June 17th 2025. It's been a blast.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

Our newest song, "The Forgotten" was released today, May 20th; it's the third single released from our upcoming EP, and we're so excited about it!

The song centers immigration detention centers, especially at the southern US border, and the experience of children who arrive without the safety of relatives. The experimental, non-traditional structure and discordant, brutal vocal lines reflect the incense subject matter, intentionally unsettling listeners without losing our signature energy - one of the things we're known for.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

Sometimes there's events that happen in the world and you pick up your guitar and write about it, sometimes it's a riff Ryan can't get out of his head, or a tune Nick's been fiddling around with, and we build a song around that...a lot of times there's something going on emotionally or personally and Annie will say "write me something angry so I can scream about this" and the train starts rolling.



This song was bouncing around our space for a few years, and when it finally gelled we decided it was one of our finest - and needed to be in the world ASAP.

We've recorded at a few different studios, and now Ryan has a recording studio set up in his basement, where we did our most recent EP. Recording days are longer and usually filled with chicken tenders and whiskey, but having the DIY ethic and ability makes it very low stress and lots of fun.

### **Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

"The Forgotten" has been in the works for a while, and really started fermenting during Trump's first term, when there started to be news coverage of people crossing the US/Mexico border. The idea of anyone being in a cage - but especially kids - was infuriating and heartbreaking, and Annie couldn't help but make it into a song.

"The next time you see a four or five year old kid, imagine them running alone, in the dark, scared - and then being put in a cage," singer Annie Oakley said. "Our news cycle moves fast and it's easy to get burned out, or feel overwhelmed by the world, but these cages are still full of people and these kids are being forgotten, which is where the name of our song came from - it's a reminder and a promise that we won't let them be forgotten."

A lot of our songs have a political bent, but we have songs about Annie's scumbag ex-husband, kids in foster care, heartbreak, losing your virginity, police surveillance, fighting with your parents - there isn't one theme we stick to, more whatever fits with the music and what we're passionate about finds its way into the lyrics.

### **Will you be hitting the road this year?**

We're currently booking out into summer/fall, and have a few weekend tours throughout the Midwest scheduled - Follow us on socials (@TheLowcocks) on all platforms, follow and listen on Spotify, and come out to a show - or reach out to us about playing a show in your city! We'd love to talk to you!

Our upcoming dates are:

June 13 - Cosmo Joe's Atomic Lounge (Dayton, OH)

June 14 - International Taco Fest (Chicago, IL)

July 26 - Punk Rock Night @ The Melody Inn (Indianapolis, IN)

Depending on publishing date, our single release schedule is as follows:

May 20th - single release #3 - "The Forgotten"

June 17 - full EP is released along with fourth song, cover of "9 to 5" by Dolly Parton

### **What else is happening next in your world?**

Between writing, recording, releasing music, and booking some shows, we're really enjoying our current moment and we can't wait for the next steps. Our goals for this year are to play wayyyy more shows around the country, and we'd love to hop on a festival or two...

We want to come out and play as much as we can, and it's so cool to meet other people who are as passionate as we are about music and punk and community. We have made so many friends already and we can't wait to meet you and make more.

The Lowcocks' music is on all major streaming platforms, including Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, or wherever finer music is enjoyed; digital purchases are also available. Purchases of physical media, including cds, vinyl, and other merch can be made from our website, [www.TheLowcocks.com](http://www.TheLowcocks.com) or at any of our live shows.

We are on social media platforms as @TheLowcocks; our links are below:



<https://www.facebook.com/thelowcocks>



<https://www.instagram.com/thelowcocks/>



<http://www.youtube.com/@thelowcocks>





# Golem Dance Cult



## **Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

Great, thanks! We are currently promoting our new album "Shamanic Faultlines" which will be released on Friday the 13th of June,

## **What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

I think it is cool to let the listener find for himself/herself. I can provide some "clue", though, this is in reference to Shamanic voyage, when at some points different planes coexist.

It is far from being a concept album but the songs form a sequence with a beginning, middle and end.

## **How was the recording and writing process?**

Long... 2 years! We took our sweet time as from the first demo we knew we had something special. A cool thing though is that we were lucky enough to collaborate with several musicians, friends of ours, such as Dick Dens from the band "The Irradiates" who played guitar on two tracks, Boris Boubilil (founder of Mu and musician with Emilie Loizeau) played Moog and organ, Loki Lockwood (Velatine and Spooky Records) the synth, Jean-Philippe Feiss on Cello, Inga Liljestrom lent us her amazing voice, again, on a few songs, Peter Miller on Theremin, guitar prodigy Michael Gonthier (Shreddguitarworx), multi-instrumentalist Blair Manie on Oud, Alex Zillon on vocals.... Super talented musicians but It take a long time to organise.

The recording in itself, was handled by Klaus Karloff with whom we have a cool working relation. Some basic tracks were recorded in a different studio, Soggy Dogs Studio in Upwey. Mastering took place at Crystal Mastering with the great Joe Carra (King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, Amyl & the sniffers, ...)

## **Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

Idea for a song can come from different sources. From a book, a discussion with a friend, an art exhibition that moves you, an heartbreak, a smell... For the music, I'm a human Juke Box and my head is permanently haunted with riffs and musical pattern.

## **Will you be hitting the road this year?**

The question is where as Laur is in France while I'm in Australia. We will see if and where the opportunities lies for us.

## **What else is happening next in your world?**

Working with visual artists for one of our future video, and spreading the cult... We started this band and do this for ourselves primarily but we found that we have a niche audience, so it is cool to share our new offerings with them.



# SICKRECY



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

S- Hi Vents and thanks, a bit busy but fine.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

S- The title Man's the leech kind of gives it away but it's about how we let corporate greed trick us into excessive consumption which in the end will be our own extinction.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

S- It all went super smooth. When writing about it i must say that it sounds a bit boring but it starts with me doing the demos in my basement. I record drums and everything and then send it to Marcus to add the proper guitar tracks. In the meantime i record Adde's vocals and when everything is ready i send it to a studio, this time WorshipNothingStudios for mix and master. Up until now i've made most of the music and all lyrics but that will change on our next full length album where we have shared the songwriting a bit more.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

S- The inspiration mostly come from the late 80's early 90's extreme music era with bands like Napalm Death, Terrorizer, Bolt Thrower and such and the lyrics is always straight up punk stuff. You know once a punk, always a punk. There's really no turning back when you look at the world today, War, genocide, fascists, the world has never been so horrible as it is now.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

S- No not really. We have some gigs here and there but nothing major. This is kind of a slow year when we focus on writing and recording new stuff for the next album. Besides writing music Adde has a lot to do with his other two bands General Surgery and Birdflesh so we bide our time until 2026.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

S- We have two more split 7inch vinyls to be released this year so beware and those tracks will of course be released on all streaming sites as well. Please follow us on our socials for more info.



# The Purple Helmets



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

We're doing great thank you! Jonathan just drove across Canada from Halifax to Vancouver, Chris is in the Caribbean, and Mike and Don are enjoying spring as it takes Canada out of its long cold winter.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

Our full album "Weirdo Squad" releases on Spotify, iTunes, and most streaming services on May 16. It includes 10 songs that were narrowed from 30 written last year. We recorded the album in the Cayman Islands with Paul Suarez at Ironshore Studios. Paul was a protégé of the legendary Andy Wallace in NYC, and is an incredible engineer and mixer having recorded Biffy Clyro, Lamb of God, Gojira, Dave Mathews, Linkin Park, Korn, and Guns n Roses. The songwriting + performance on these songs is strong and Paul captured the essence of the band in our highest fidelity to date. It sounds fantastic, and Jamsphere Magazine in the United States has even said it might just be the finest album to come out of Canada in 2025. We're humbled but very proud of it. We decided to call it "Weirdo Squad" after Chris' track on the record. It resonated with us as we come from a small fishing community in Nova Scotia Canada called Yarmouth. It's a small town but the artists from there really push the envelope and create some fantastic music. While the band is certainly a weirdo squad, so is the community of musicians and artists from this area of Canada. We poke fun at ourselves and the name of the record hopefully invokes a bit of our sense of humour.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

We were inspired to work towards an album last year, and wrote a collective of 30 songs. We then narrowed this to what we thought were the 10 best, rehearsed these songs and played them live to great response. Chris lives in Grand Cayman now and we decided to record there at

Ironshore Studios with Paul Suarez. Paul clearly leans towards metal and heavy rock. So, while we are an indie band with influences from the 80s single era, brit pop, and Americana, we were pleasantly surprised and pleased to see Paul's recording process expand our EQ and sonic resonance to fatten the sound in all directions, expanding the low end on bass, with punchy drums, cutting guitar tones, and vocals with the best industry microphones available. We also layered in synth for the first time in any of our recordings.

The songs are eclectic as our taste is in music. Here are a few examples: The leadoff single "Criminal of Love" is a song inspired by the 80's band "the Outfield" and the vocal register that was attained by that singer. Chris had heard Jonathan sing like that many times over the years as a joke, but Chris knew Jonathan could hit that high register B4 note that many male vocalists can't reach. Chris felt the time might be right to reintroduce that vocal range in a modern indie pop song. "Highway 17" is completely different, and leans on it's Americana influences like the Jayhawks, Wilco, and merges it with the pop sentiments from Neil Finn, making it very catchy and memorable. "Weirdo Squad" is Bowie-esque song and layered with harmonies, resulting in a melody that shines and glistens. We try and make each song an earworm. We focus on stripping a song down to its key elements, then building it back up so there are no distractions from its core components.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

We certainly write about anything and everything. Relationships, love, loss, what's in the news, sci-fi, family. Influences to write can come from any source. An Interesting chord combo, a personal event, an intriguing sentence and of course a desire to write. It's an eclectic mix. As an example, Chris wrote the song "Criminal of Love" about how relationships can be repaired with the emerging power of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. It delves deep in its

dreamy fascination of the topic discussing the self reflection and un-egotistical view of being a criminal or victim (of love) and how we are headed towards a path where AI will be used to help mediate and resolve these conflicts. This is highlighted in the middle 8 lyric, "With Machine Learning We Anticipate the Calm, and the Precipice is Fate". It's out there for sure, but we love it. Where else would you see lyrics like that today? It's very unique and original. At the same time, he writes another pop song called "Moon Base Alpha" whose lyrics simply summarize the Season 2 intro of the 70's cult favorite sci fi show "Space 1999". It's that simple and doesn't really go any deeper. Its just looking for fun and what might sound interesting lyrically and phonetically within the melody. In another example, Donnie has a song on the album called, "We Are The Ones Who Created This Mess", introducing heavier and darker lyrical themes focusing on Western foreign policy seeding political, cultural, and religious divergence.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

We will likely play near our home turf in Nova Scotia Canada, but we're also in discussion with various agents in the UK and America and would love to fly to a target festival or grouping of shows over a week or 2 with complimentary indie acts.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

Right now, just concentrating on this new album titled "Weirdo Squad" and trying to get the music out there for people to enjoy. Lots of planning has to happen as we are spread out across Canada and beyond. We're just getting our first radio plays in the UK as an example. That's exciting for us!

We're bootstrapping this effort like a lot of indie bands, which means rolling up our sleeves and doing it ourselves including our own PR campaigns. It is busy responding to media outlets, radio stations, and other aspects from the industry. It is growing and scaling, and honestly, we could use some help. So, if you read this and you like the tunes and the band, please reach out and offer us some advice or assistance.



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

We've been great, VENTS. Thank you. Next question. Just Kidding...

We've been loud, busy, and hungry. It's been a nonstop ride lately with recording, shows, and getting our next single LSC ready to release. We're in a great place right now creatively and as a band. The momentum is building and we're locked in.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

Our most recent release is I'll See You in the Stars. The title and lyrics came from a personal experience, rooted in obsession and the kind of longing that sticks with you. It's about wanting something, or someone, that feels like it should be yours, even though deep down you know it's not meant to be. There's beauty in that sadness, and that's what the song tries to capture.

Musically, the foundation of the track was written years ago. It was one of those early jams that came to life during a long night, inspired by a lot of feeling and a little bit of mushrooms. We wanted the song to take listeners on a journey, and it still does that for us every time we play it.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

The recording process for I'll See You in the Stars was honestly one of the most enjoyable and relaxed sessions we've had. We tracked everything ourselves at Jeff's place, which gave us the freedom to take our time, experiment with different tones and sounds, and not feel the pressure of being on the clock in a traditional studio. It was fun and creative, and having that control made the whole thing more personal.

From a performance standpoint, it felt like a big step forward. The drum tracking came out stronger than when we first wrote the song. Everyone was locked in. Braden mentioned that this one felt smoother to track than a lot of the others from that batch of nine songs. It just flowed better, like it had something extra in it.

What made it really special was the connection. Being in that comfortable, familiar space allowed us to go deeper emotionally. Amanda cried during the vocal takes, and it hit all of us. Seeing that kind of raw emotion happening in real time reminded us why we do this. It was not just recording a song. It was capturing a real moment between four people who care about what they're creating.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

The inspiration for I'll See You in the Stars came from an experience Amanda had about 15 years ago. It was something deeply personal, tied to obsession and emotional fixation. The kind of experience that stays with you, even when it's hard to talk about. She's mentioned having to revisit that moment over

# Famous Strangers



and over again, and the song became a way to finally give it a voice.

Musically, the song was originally written many years ago during a psychedelic trip. It had that otherworldly, reflective feel from the beginning. Over time, it evolved into something much deeper, especially once the lyrics came in. The final version is both raw and reflective, grounded in a real story and a real emotion that never quite let go.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Yes, we're planning a Western Canadian tour this summer that will take us through Armstrong and into the fall with stops in Kelowna and Vancouver. We're also working on plans to head south, and if things line up, we're hoping to make it down to Los Angeles by late fall or the end of the year. We're ready to get out there and play these songs live for as many people as possible.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

A lot. We're currently gearing up to release our next single LSC on June 3, with the official music video dropping on June 12. Pre-saves are already up, and we're stoked for people to hear and see what we've been building. It's one of our most intense and layered tracks yet, and it's going to mark a shift in how we present ourselves moving forward.

This summer, we're hitting the stage at several major festivals including Decimate MetalFest, Armstrong MetalFest, and Loud As Hell. Those shows are going to give us a chance to connect with new crowds and bring our energy to some of the biggest heavy lineups in Western Canada.

We're also planning a Western Canadian tour with Gravemass (Vancouver) in places like Calgary, Armstrong, Kelowna, and Vancouver, and we're actively working on pushing further. Our goal is to make it down to Los Angeles by late fall, and we're laying the groundwork to make that happen.

On top of the shows, we're deep into writing and recording a new four-song EP that we plan to release later this year. The writing process has been wild lately. We're pushing ourselves, experimenting more, and figuring out exactly who we are in this next phase.

The truth is, we never stop. There's always something new on the go — writing, recording, planning, editing, promoting. We love every part of it, and we're just getting started.



# TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

We've been good, thanks for having us. There's a lot happening behind the scenes right now, and it's all building toward a busy summer ahead. New music, new shows, and some cool stuff we've got planned for fans who can't always make it out in person.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

Our most recent release is our debut EP, Tunnel Vision. The name came from how we approached the process. We had to block everything else out and really focus. At first, we were rushing to get things done, but once we slowed down and gave each part the attention it needed, everything started to click. The title became a reminder of what happens when we cut the noise and fully commit.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

We record everything ourselves in Craig's basement (our practice space) using Mario's gear. That setup gives us a lot of freedom to experiment and stay loose with the process. Craig handles lyrics, and once we've got a spark, we build the structure together. Devon and Mario usually start working out the rhythm while Craig figures out the hook. When it's time to record, we layer everything piece by piece and bounce ideas around to find what feels right. That could be tweaking drum fills, new harmonies or cutting the instruments out for a big gang vocal. Once we've built out the tracks, we send them to Anthony at Small Room Studio. He puts the professional polish on our rough recordings and helps bring everything to life. We're always stoked to work with him. Mario actually worked with Anthony over a decade ago in a previous band, and he also helped us finish Tunnel Vision, so it's been a long-standing relationship that just keeps getting better.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

Most of our inspiration comes from lived experience. The songs on Tunnel Vision are shaped by everything from burnout to growing pains to frustration with the world around us. Some tracks came from specific moments we couldn't stop thinking about, others just started with a feeling that needed to get out. Our upcoming single Therapy is a great example of how that evolves. We've been playing it live and tweaking it based on crowd reaction, leaning into the big moments and letting the audience guide what hits hardest.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

That's the plan. We've got a handful of shows lined up around New York and New Jersey this summer, and we're hoping to expand that into week-end runs or short trips in the fall and winter. We want to start connecting with new scenes without losing the consistency we've built at home.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

We're gearing up to start recording Therapy this summer. The live version has already become a crowd favorite, so we're excited to finally bring it into the studio. We're also mapping out our fall show calendar and working toward another EP release in late 2025 or early 2026. New merch is on the way, and we're planning a livestream to bring the energy to fans who can't be there in person. Everything we're doing is about keeping the momentum alive and making every step count.

## BIO

**Take It Or Leave It is a punk band from Rockland County, New York. Loud, energetic, and emotionally honest, they blend catchy hooks with raw punk, performing high-energy shows that mix originals and "punkified" covers. Known for their consistency and connection to the crowd, TIOLI treats every set like it matters, because it does. They've also leaned into livestreams to connect with fans who can't always make it to shows. The band embraces the nickname Pasta Rock, a playful nod to the way "TIOLI" sounds like "ravioli." It's more than just a rhyme, it's a vibe. Pasta Rock forever.**

## LINK TREE

**https://linktr.ee/music.takeitorleaveit**

**Craig Chalfin - Bass, Vocals**

**Mario Frascione - Guitar, Manager**

**Devon Beuschel - Drums**

## SOCIALS

**Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/takeitorleaveit\_band**

**Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/takeitorleaveitband**

**YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@Music.TakeItOrLeaveIt**

**Bluesky: https://bsky.app/profile/tioli-band.bsky.social**

**TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@takeitorleaveit\_band**

**Twitch: https://www.twitch.tv/takeitorleaveit\_band**

## MUSIC

**Soundcloud: https://soundcloud.com/takeitorleaveit-872042877**

**BandCamp: https://takeitorleaveitband.bandcamp.com/album/tunnel-vision**

**Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/artist/5S60w9S5bvsF4qM00hj6V?si=JBUD-wxl-RAOxAYjsp\_maxw**

**Apple Music: https://music.apple.com/us/artist/take-it-or-leave-it/1777896776**

**Amazon Music: https://music.amazon.com/artists/B017WY07QI/**

**take-it-or-leave-it?marketplaceId=ATVPDKIKX0DER&musicTerritory=US&ref=dm\_sh\_T8xEQeAy5t6qutx57HmfJAmEN**