



CIVILIAN - *You Wouldn't Believe What Privilege Costs*

Intricately melodic and immediately captivating, CIVILIAN's *You Wouldn't Believe What Privilege Costs* is both a bold declaration from, and rebirth for, songwriter Ryan Alexander. Standing tall among its Indie Rock peers, *YWBWPC* guarantees Civilian's place in the canon of modern American independent music.

A follow-up to 2012's *Should This Noose Unloosen*, *YWBWPC*'s ringing guitars and sonorous vocals sway with austere, precise drumming while thoughtful bass paints outside the lines. Unlike its predecessor, "all of these songs were written after having just fallen ass over tip for a gal" as Alexander so eloquently puts it. "I wrote with the same intention – to, through art, add nuance to how we talk about government and poverty - except this time my brain was drenched in dopamine and serotonin."

An incredibly mature collection of songs, the road Alexander took to arrive at *YWBWPC* provides at least a hint of an answer to how we find ourselves faced with a record so simultaneously beautiful and uncomfortable. "My older brother came home with a borrowed guitar and showed me how to play 'Wild Thing'. I would continue to play 'Wild Thing' - and virtually nothing else - from 6th through 11th grade." Alexander wrote his first real song after dropping out of college in late 2004. He started a band, creatively titled Alexander, released two well-received records, and was named "Band of the Year" in South Florida by *New Times*.

From 2004 to 2009 Alexander divided his time between songwriting and leading a 20,000 person congregation at a Florida church. "I loved the people who went to this church," says Alexander. "I could help them see God in anything. Over time, this began to feel fake - like I was telling people what they wanted to hear, and they would hold on to hope." This dissonance birthed CIVILIAN. "I intentionally set out to push myself toward conversations that millions of people want to have but are too afraid to initiate." Thus, Alexander's songwriting charges headlong into the unflattering and the difficult.

"I put my head down and went on to write and record *Should This Noose Unloosen* with producer Dan Hannon (Manchester Orchestra)." *STNU* was his first unfiltered attempt at adding nuance to social conversations; *James Kent* recounts the suicide of a homeless man who would live with Alexander for a year and - after several decades of addiction to crack - asked Alexander to drop him back off under the bridge where they had met.

Alexander returned to the studio in February of 2016 intending to continue those conversations. Yet when Alexander relocated to Nashville in 2014 he hadn't planned on writing at all. "A guy told me he was a studio manager and that I should come by and do a song." It turned out the studio was the legendary Sound Stage (Johnny Cash, Steve Earle, Merle Haggard, Bob Dylan) on Nashville's original Studio Row.

"I wrote seventeen songs over the next two weeks" says Alexander. "I set up a keyboard stand and put a little desk top on it. With my mattress on the floor behind me I would wake up and fall asleep every day with instruments and broken strings all over my bed. I hardly left my house."

"*YWBWPC* is an attempt to examine the intersection of love and politics and science and hope and nihilism. These aren't mutually exclusive ideas" says Alexander. "They interact every second of every day, yet we feel the need to keep them separate and neat. Love is anything but neat. Religion is anything but easy. Politics are anything but convenient."

Alexander continues to pull no punches on the new record. "Michael" tells the tale of a homeless male prostitute that lived with Alexander in South Florida, a spotlight on the disparity between how we correlate beauty and privilege. "Skulls" is a paean to the excruciating euphoria that comes with fully surrendering oneself to love, while the intensely personal "I Told You" retraces Alexander's steps through the dissolution of his faith.

"I hope people listen to this record and let it unsettle them. I want people to see the people they love in the people I love - the people I am writing about," says Alexander. "I want people to know that what they think and say really matters and that nothing deep and meaningful should be off limits. We should boldly sit at the table of ideas and share our stories. This is what it is to be human."