

BUT HER LYRICS...EPISODE 12

SHOW NOTES:

This episode of But Her Lyrics... tackles track 10 on Wonderful Hell, "The Ash is Not the End." The band talks about how writing and recording this song was a little different than all the others. Host Shawna interviews Ian Danskin (of Innuendo Studios), whose videos about the alt-right, gmrgate, and angry white men directly inspired the lyrics. Find out what a spinal injury, Adult Swim, and Elliott Smith have to do with it. Listen til the end to hear Shawna's request for help deciding what the hell should happen next. It's not often you get to tell a feminist what to do!

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LINKS/RESOURCES:

Innuendo Studios <https://www.youtube.com/c/InnuendoStudios>

Song covered by Homeless Gospel Choir: Wingnut Dishwashers Union - Proudton in Manhattan,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXjHdJ90i9Q>

Adult Swim Singles Series version of "The Ash is Not the End":

<https://www.adultswim.com/music/singles-2018/28>

Michael Habib's band: Leisure Sport <https://leisuresport.bandcamp.com>

Girl Problem Records (original recording of "YDTMHTL"): <https://girlproblemrecords.bandcamp.com/>

Culture Warlords book: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/50997978-culture-warlords>

Exotic Fever Records: <https://www.exoticfever.com/artists.php?id=115>

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

[intro music]

Shawna Potter: Welcome to But Her Lyrics, the show where we delve into the meaning and politics behind each song from the new War On Women album Wonderful Hell. I'm Shawna Potter, singer and lyricist for War On Women and your host. This episode we're tackling a song with a history, a story. Track 10 "The Ash Is Not The End" or TAINTE for short. Ugh, I regret that already. Please no one get that acronym tattooed on you. It's not nearly as cool as YDTMHTL. Thank you. Or I guess if you do, I'll give you

\$100 cuz that's nuts. This is the second to last track on the album which means it's the second to last official episode of the season. Eek! Listen through the end of this episode because I'm going to ask for your help, and I want you to hear me ask you. Just listen to the whole thing. Okay, let's get on with the song. The lyrics pull from a few different sources. One is from my upcoming interviewee Ian Danskin of Innuendo Studios, and so I'm gonna talk with him extensively about that as well as the band interviews that come later. But another part of the song was inspired by my buddy Derek Zanetti of The Homeless Gospel Choir who we've been lucky enough to tour with a couple times thanks to Anti-Flag, and we've gotten to know more over the years. And he's a good friend. One time he came through Baltimore and played at The Sidebar, but it was just him and an acoustic playing on the floor, standing up, singing songs, his songs and some covers. But he played this one song, and part of the lyrics really stuck with me. So let's hear in his own words a little bit about that song.

Derek Zanetti: Shawna Potter, Derek Zanetti here reporting live from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. No big whoop. Hello to War On Women and all my friends there in Baltimore. I hope you are well and enjoying the summer. Lord knows I am. Anyhow, I wanted to send you this little voice memo about this song that I used to cover. Shawna asked me about this song about "filling up the potholes." And I used to cover a Wingnut Dishwashers Union song all the time called "Proudhon in Manhattan," and I love this song so much. And I love the way it makes me feel when I hear it, and I love to play it. I played this song live. I just did a cover song of it every once in a while, and I think I was on tour with y'all War On Women and Anti-Flag whenever I first started to play at the shows. And Pat sings with such an urgency, and it makes you really believe in what he's saying. And Proudhon was a French thinker, and he asserted that property is theft. And I think in a way to weave Manhattan and Proudhon's teachings, this song was kind of birth to that. And the particular line that I wanted to share is, "And the anarchists have started filling potholes and collecting garbage to prove that we don't need government to do these things." And that line sticks out to me too because I do think that in an ideal world, in an ideal way that we wouldn't need to have people collect our trash and we wouldn't need government to keep us safe or protect any type of border or anything like that, that in a perfect utopian world anarchy doesn't look like spray painting and busting out windows. It can certainly. But in my humble mind and in my thought of it, anarchy looks a lot like making a real big cake or a real big casserole and sharing it and then cleaning up afterwards and providing people with opportunity and providing fair wage and fair work and maybe not necessarily money but other things that people are interested too. And yeah. This song also would always bring me back to the idea of anarchy and what I think it is or what I think it could be. And in an ideal situation and ideal world anarchy looks a lot like cooperating to create something that's different and better that everybody can benefit from. And so yeah. I think that's why the line resonated with me, and it still resonates with me. I don't play that song live. It's been a number of years since I have. Not to say that I wouldn't. But, yeah, I like that song pretty good. And I love Ramshackle Glory. That record Burn the Earth! and Leave it Behind! was recorded right in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, if you believe that. Anyhow, have a great day y'all. I love you so very much. I think that you're the best. I'm glad that we're friends. Thank you for asking me to say this thing on your podcast, Shawna. Heck yeah, I'll talk to y'all soon. Okay. Have a great day.

Shawna Potter: [laughs] Thank you Derek for sending that to me for the podcast. That's super cool. I didn't know it was a cover song until getting ready for this episode. I just thought that Derek was a

genius. But, yeah, that idea of anarchists would be filling all the potholes, that people would see a problem and work towards the solution and not wait for someone else to solve it for them. And even more than that, instead of just complaining about the problem and reveling in the fact that other people are failing to then step up and say, "Well, we'll take care of it. We're gonna fix this for ourselves." That the true meaning of punk and anarchism is not to just have a mohawk and be like, "Fuck the system." and that's it. It means DIY for real, doing it ourselves. Because we can't rely on people in power to do it for us. But we have to take care of each other. And so, yeah, that theme is constant in the song. And I think that because it's the only song really that I wrote in between Capture The Flag and Wonderful Hell that the theme of The Ash Is Not The End you can sort of hear it in the rest of the album Wonderful Hell that things suck but we can do this. We can band together and make it better. So that's where this all comes in. It also should be known that we are not a band of extensive recording sessions and having a bunch of demos and having a bunch of extra songs sitting around. We have people asking us all the time to contribute songs to compilations. And we just always have to be like, "Well, do you want something that's already been released?" Cuz that's all we've got. We whittle it down in the bare bones stage and then kind of only work on the songs that are gonna make it on the album. And basically if something's not good enough to put on the album, it's just not good enough yet. Period. We don't want anyone listening to it. So at some point we were asked by Adult Swim to contribute a song to their singles series. And that seemed like a good enough excuse to write a one-off and record it, right? They were giving us some money, so we had a budget to record which we don't often do. And so we just kind of churned out a song in between tours and album cycles, and that's not something that this band does a lot. So that was very cool to do and interesting too. We're gonna talk about all the versions of the song that we've had in the band interviews. But it was just very cool to be able to sit with a song for a while and see, "Okay, can I do this better?" just as a vocalist. I'm sure everybody else felt the same way. What do I wanna change? And how's it feel? Could that be improved? That's kind of a neat thing but all right. So, to the interview. My guest is Ian Danskin aka Innuendo Studios. He makes video essays about games, web culture, and social politics. I found him because our very online bass player, Sue, recommended his video series The Alt-Right Playbook and Why Are You So Angry? when I expressed an interest in maybe writing a song about Gamergate. I didn't end up writing--The Ash Is Not The End didn't turn out to be exclusively about Gamergate. But, honestly, that's in large part to how interesting I found Ian's videos.

[Music]

INTERVIEW:

Shawna Potter: Hi Dan. Introduce yourself.

Ian Danskin: My name is Ian.

Shawna Potter: Oh my god. What? [Ian laughs] Why do I have Dan written down? Well, that's staying in. Jesus Christ. It's been a long day. It's been a long pandemic.

Shawna Potter: Ian

Ian: Hi.

Shawna Potter: Ian hi. Introduce yourself.

Ian: Hi. My name is Ian Danskin. And--

Shawna Potter: That's it. It's cuz of your last name. Come on.

Ian: Yeah. This is a--

Shawna Potter: All right. You gotta give me that. [laughs]

Ian: This is a common thing. It's actually become a meme on the internet now. People call me Dan even when they know it's not my name.

Shawna Potter: I'm so sorry.

Ian: It's okay. It's okay. I'm glad it's finally made it to podcast universe. [Shawna laughs] Yeah, I'm the host and creator of the YouTube channel Innuendo Studios. And I'm probably best known for my series on far-right rhetoric called The Alt-Right Playbook.

Shawna Potter: How does one become a popular YouTuber explaining stuff that attracts probably a ton of trolls, right?

Ian: Hmm. Yeah. I don't know how one does it, but it happened. It was kind of a gamble of like I have this thing that once the former president who shall not be named got elected, I had this need like, "I need to do something with all this anxiety I have about him."

Shawna Potter: Mhm. I know that feeling.

Ian: Yeah. A lot of people are like, "How can you stand to do this?" I'm like, "I don't know. How do you stand dealing with anxiety and not make something out of it?" And it was mostly a video gaming YouTube channel at the time, and I just made the first Alt-Right Playbook out of some notes that had leftover from a different series I'd done before. And it ended up being the most popular thing I've done, so it's actually made the channel more popular and more successful.

Shawna Potter: I think that just speaks to how necessary the information is that you're providing.

Ian: The very least the algorithm likes it.

Shawna Potter: Yeah. [laughs] Right. Maybe just putting alt-right in the title bumped it up. [laughs]

Ian: Yeah.

Shawna Potter: Okay. When did you know it needed to be a series and not just a one-off?

Ian: I apparently can't do anything in short bursts anymore. [Shawna laughs] I did this series several years ago when Gamergate was still happening about anti-feminism in the video game community and about kind of using that as a doorway to talk about male entitlement, where does it come from. And originally the plan for that was like, "Oh, I'll do one video that's two parts. One sort of talking about

anti-feminism in video game spaces and then one part talking about here's the rhetorical tactics I see these people using a lot." And then that first part ballooned into six parts, and that became the whole video. And I was like, "Okay, let me shelve that list of tactics." And then with the rise of the alt-right and the 2016 election, it became clear like, "Okay, so these tactics are still in play." Some of them have evolved. There's some new ones, but a lot of the core underlying stuff is still there. So I wanna take that idea again. And instead of it being one big video that's a list of things, I'll just do a bunch of small videos. And then none of the videos are small anymore.

Shawna Potter: [laughs] I was curious. Did you get a chance to listen to the song?

Ian: Yeah, I've listened to it a few times.

Shawna Potter: Oh, okay. What do you think? You don't have to like it. I just mean what do you think.

Ian: Oh no, it's good. It's good.

Shawna Potter: [laughs] Did anything stick out to you as far as how it relates to The Alt-Right Playbook?

Ian: Well, you told me that you felt that they related. And so I was definitely reading the lyrics like, "What is it?" I'm like, "Okay, I think I can kind of see." I'm more curious how you think they're related though.

Shawna Potter: Oh. Well, I talked about this at the top of the episode. But some of the lyrics were pulled from my notes. When I was watching some of your videos, I'd just take notes. So just write things down, phrases, things that are interesting. And so that idea of like, "Hey, you're a really great guy. And it's not your fault that no one likes you or that you don't have a girlfriend or--But here's this community of really hateful people that totally support you, so why don't you just join us?" That idea really struck me, and I kind of had that in mind throughout the writing of this song.

Ian: Yeah, I think I was thinking it was along those lines. It's great to ask the person who wrote it what it meant and then say, "Yeah, that's totally what I thought."

Shawna Potter: [laughs] Me, too. Me, too. Do you think it's safe to use the terms Gamergate or alt-right in the description of this podcast episode? How likely am I to get doxxed?

Ian: Well, it is always--You're gambling.

Shawna Potter: Okay.

Ian: Podcasts are often very safe for talking about these things because there's no transcript of the actual things you say. So they're hard to search, and most pricks don't listen past the first couple of minutes. [Shawna laughs] I've listened to podcasts where they are like, "We can say anything after the first five minutes, and no one's gonna get mad at us and take it out of context."

Shawna Potter: That's incredible.

Ian: But if you put it in the title, yeah, some people will find it. And it's just kind of a question of, are they looking at the moment that it's out there? And then when they roll the dice on do we wanna ruin somebody's life, does your number come up? I've always been very lucky being a cishet white dude that my number has not come up yet even though I'm poking these people with sticks professionally.

Shawna Potter: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Ian: And I've gotten some crap but never the full life ruining stuff that some of my colleagues have for doing far less than I do. But your number might come up easier than mine.

Shawna Potter: Yeah. Since we started the band, I've kind of just been waiting for something like that to happen. And I'm frankly quite surprised that we don't get more rape and death threats, that we haven't been doxxed. And I think it's luck. I think it's just my number hasn't come up yet. But I've also wondered if it's because--I think we're an actually angry band, an actual threatening, angry, serious, intimidating band. When you see us live, maybe not in some of our goofy promo photos. I think it's easy for men to maybe make fun of riot grrrl even though that anger is real and valid and I fucking love Bikini Kill, stuff like that. But the fact that it is a girl and the name that it's like, "They're not technically proficient at their instruments." And obviously that doesn't matter when you're making really great music, but I could see how it'd be easier for one of those kinds of dudes to dismiss them or a band like them. But then they look at us and they're like, "Oh shit, this band is for real." But maybe I'm just fooling myself a little bit on that. [laughs]

Ian: I don't think they could listen to the record and say you can't play.

Shawna Potter: Right. Right.

Ian: Yeah. But I don't know. Sometimes it's just there are so many people whose lives they can ruin that they can't ruin them all.

Shawna Potter: Maybe we're just not popular enough actually.

Ian: Maybe.

Shawna Potter: I think our social numbers are low compared to others.

Ian: Sure. But I have seen them pluck someone from utter obscurity, right? One of the chief targets of Gamergate was Brianna Wu. And at the time she was not known by anyone, right? She was just a random woman who tweeted a joke at Gamergate's expense. And they were just like, "This one." And there were thousands of women doing the same thing, and they just picked one.

Shawna Potter: Wow.

Ian: So, yeah, it's also depressing to me when you say it's surprising that we haven't gotten more rape threats and more death threats. No, we haven't gotten them. Just--

Shawna Potter: We haven't gotten zero. We've gotten more than zero, that's for sure. [laughs] So I just spoke about that idea that I talked about in the song that I got from your video, the idea that if you're

lonely and angry someone telling you that you're not alone and that you're right. That idea is gonna be really enticing. Can you speak to that mentality a little bit? And this is covered in your video series, and people should watch it obviously. But just what are you thinking in regards to that in this moment?

Ian: One of the the big sort of things that I learned when I was researching actually more traditional white supremacist groups, people like Hammerskin Nation or Aryan Nation things like them is so much of it is about culture and community. It's actually hardcore punk is the entryway for a lot of people like skinhead punk, Oi! music.

Shawna Potter: Oh no. Oh no. Sorry.

Ian: You clearly are not a skinhead. [laughs] But I can see you on camera right now. You have hair. So--

Shawna Potter: That's true. That's true. You heard it here first, people.

Ian: They come in, and it's for the community that they come into these spaces. And then it's just, "Oh, what? The price of admission for this community is I should shave my head and talk about the glory of the European race?" [Shawna laughs] And at the time that seems very abstract, right? Cuz it's like, "Look, I'm just here to mosh." And then that slowly goes farther and farther because you're in community with--If anyone in your community is pushing a little farther then it's kind of like, "Well, you can either let that person leave the community or the whole community can kind of start going with them." And so you see a lot of these things. And it's not just skinhead music. Neofolk paganism has got a big foothold with this sort of thing as well. And--

Shawna Potter: That seems terrible.

Ian: --so many of my videos are about like, "Yeah." And they do it with the Star Wars fandom. They do it with video games. It's any space where you are like, "Hey, this feels like my people. And if my people say that these other people are the enemy, well, I'm not gonna leave my people over that." And then it's just this slow upping of the ante until your whole community is this way. And you don't even, strictly speaking, realize that you've adopted it as well just because you're going with the flow of the people who matter most to you. The interesting contradiction there though is that a lot of these spaces they're so anti social. The incel community is so about you going into this space where people are literally telling you, "Yes, you are alone. You will always be alone. You will die alone. But at least you're with the only people who are honest about it." It's like this kind of anti-community community.

Shawna Potter: Right. People really like to feel like they're the underdog. There is some glory in that. And just the wallowing in self pity, that can feel more comfortable and easier than doing the work to get out of that kind of hole.

Ian: Yeah. You wanna shake them sometimes. Just listen to Elliott Smith like a normal person.

Shawna Potter: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah. Something else that stuck with me and it's actually something from your video series. And it's actually something I've referenced in my bystander intervention trainings a lot when I speak about online harassment. Cuz no matter what kind of training I'm doing for bystander intervention they're like, "Okay, cool. What about online?" And I'm like, "Oh, that's its own thing. That's

its own hour. But okay." Give them a couple of tips. And one of those tips is from your videos, the idea of you can help a victim of harassment online by quote "putting on a show for the uninformed". Can you explain this concept to everyone listening?

Ian: I always think about well, you have these two different goals. One can be, "I wanna change this person's mind." And one can be, "I just wanna contain what they're saying so it doesn't infiltrate the rest of the community." So sometimes it's very good to take that person aside into direct messages or something and be like, "Hey, where is this coming from?" And you have to have this--It's a very time consuming, very emotionally draining way of interacting with a person. But if you have the time and the relationship with them that you can do this, you can figure out what actually is your individual path that is taking you to this place. It's almost as difficult as getting someone out of an abusive relationship, so it can take a really really long time. You may not succeed, but you can at least maybe plant some seeds that will flourish at some point later in their life. A lot of times the more putting on a show thing is about like, "Okay, I need to not engage with this person directly." But hey, if I'm a respected person in this community where the rest of the community is gonna listen to me, we're gonna talk about this stuff. We're gonna talk about it more broadly unless in argument with this one person, but we're gonna deconstruct where this comes from. We're gonna try to take control of that narrative in like, "I'm gonna put you in my mindset." rather than start with, "Here's their mindset, and here's why it's wrong." Like, "Here's my mindset, and here is the frame I want you to start thinking." And I'm gonna take time to build that frame up. And then by the time we look at this, we're gonna realize, "Oh, this does not jive with the actual ethics that we have which can only usually flourish if they have remained unquestioned."

Shawna Potter: Yeah. I really really like the idea of acknowledging that we're not always in a position to change one person's mind and that it is a process. And if you don't have that time or that relationship or that privilege to be in that position to take them aside digitally, then there's still something else you can do. And that's just to make sure that you show other people that there's an alternative viewpoint basically. [laughs]

Ian: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. You wanna make sure that anytime there's nonsense getting spewed around that, the truth is tagged into it somewhere so that people who see it also see it challenged. But you also as much as possible wanna make sure that it's not always attached to the nonsense but that you've also got like, "Hey, can I make sure that I am the thing that the nonsense has to try to get attached to?" so that we're not only just reacting but also we are taking control of the narrative as much as we can.

Shawna Potter: I wanna ask you about your new video series CO-VIDs. What is that all about?

Ian: The Alt-Right Playbook kind of went on pause when the pandemic began in part just because I was really stressed and anxious, and I'd been doing it for like three years at that point.

Shawna Potter: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Ian: And it was very different. I tried to take a break every few episodes to talk about like, "Here's a game that I love or here's a movie that I love. Here's something fun and interesting and me just going down my little rabbit holes." And it just seems so draining in the summer of 2020 to try to make these long deep--The next video was supposed to be about like, "Okay, let's really talk about systemic white

supremacy." Cuz you can't talk about the right if you're not talking about how integral race is to American conservatism and American liberalism, if we're being honest.

Shawna Potter: Right, right.

Ian: And that was just so hard and so daunting that I was just like, "I'm gonna look through those lists of topics I had before I was primarily a political YouTuber. And just is there anything I just wanna grab and run with that I could turn around fast and be very fast and loose and not overthinking things?" And so that was CO-VIDs was just faster, looser, easier videos that were originally supposed to come out more frequently which--As is always, the case the ambition slowly scoped up and they got longer and more complicated and came out less often. But it was just something that I could do with all the buzziness in my brain. So it didn't really--It can be any topic like, "Oh, here's a video game series that I really liked and it ended recently and here's some thoughts I have about it." Or like, "Here's a problem I see with Dr. Horrible." [Shawna laughs] But then all the protests started happening over the summer. And then I was like, "Okay, I need to say something about the demand for nonviolent protests especially in instances where the police are being violent with the protesters." And I've come across some of that in my research, so I needed to talk about that. And then, again, all of this stuff started to get more complicated. I was like, "Oh, let's talk about why the right yells, 'Cuck' at people. And I'm gonna get a little autobiographical here, and I'm going to talk about--" That's no way to avoid talking about misogyny and racism, if you're talking about that. And my last video was like, "I wanna talk about Daria. But I guess I'm also talking about neoliberalism and failures of capitalism." And so I have one more I intend to do. And then I'm like, "I'm ready to be back on The Alt-Right Playbook."

Shawna Potter: Yeah?

Ian: Yeah.

Shawna Potter: You think you're mentally there?

Ian: Well, the script is done. Now I've just got the problem if I can't sit at a desk cuz I have a spine injury. So I'm hiring an animator for the first time which is gonna be interesting.

Shawna Potter: But maybe good.

Ian: Yeah, it's time to learn how to collaborate again. I've been a one-man band for so long, so--

Shawna Potter: Ask for help.

Ian: --time to get a drummer, I guess. [Shawna laughs] But yeah. So that's sort of exciting and sort of daunting. Learning new skills is always terrifying.

Shawna Potter: [laughs] That's for sure. Obviously we're all wishing you the best with your injury and hope that you heal--

Ian: Yeah, thank you.

Shawna Potter: --well and quickly.

Ian: This point it's too late to be quickly.

Shawna Potter: Fair. Okay, fair.

Ian: But, well is a hope.

Shawna Potter: Okay, okay. That's good. How can people find you, and what do you wanna promote right now?

Ian: Oh, I am Innuendo Studios pretty much everywhere I am. So I'm on Twitter as Innuendo Studios. I'm on Patreon as Innuendo Studios. I'm on YouTube as, my main thing, Innuendo Studios. I'm still technically on Tumblr as Innuendo Studios. Mostly it's where I post transcripts of the videos for anyone who is auditorily impaired. And then sometimes I also write little micro reviews of adventure games. Just like, "Here's some thoughts on an adventure game."

Shawna Potter: Right. Cool. Are we the kind of band that you would normally listen to like a punk band?

Ian: Yeah. I don't listen to a lot of punk, but I like good punk. And it's--

Shawna Potter: So not us? Got it.

Ian: No. [Shawna laughs] I was impressed. I was like, "Okay, someone I don't really know on the internet they have a punk band. Hopefully, it's not too bad."

Shawna Potter: Total crap. Yeah.

Ian: And then I listened to it like, "Actually, this is pretty good."

Shawna Potter: I will absolutely take that. I will absolutely take that. [laughs]

Ian: Yeah, so I've listened to the album all the way through. I've listened to Ash Is Not the End a few times now, and it's a toe-tapper. [Shawna and Ian laugh]

Shawna Potter: Thank you. Thank you. What's your favorite punk?

Ian: Favorite punk--

Shawna Potter: No, not person but band. That came out weird.

Ian: If we're calling it punk, I've got a soft spot for Fugazi. Ian MacKaye has my name. I'm a sucker for The Shape of Punk to Come by Refused.

Shawna Potter: It's the best.

Ian: I know it's a really basic answer. It's like saying your favorite rock album is OK Computer. And then I kind of came to it through--there were a lot of sort of like hardcore punk bands in my hometown. And so

there was a lot of people listening to like Converge. I really like Botch who I didn't find until after they'd broken up, but psych mathcore was kind of a big thing. Yeah, it's kind of reminded me that I've been off of punk for too long. And just recently a friend of mine was talking about how her kid is four years old and she's really into heavy music. And my friend is like, "I don't have enough heavy music." And I was like, "You may like a playlist of heavy music?"

Shawna Potter: That's fun.

Ian: So I made a playlist for this four year old. And I realized as I made it, "There's too many male voices on here. I need to find some women who rock." And so that's how I discovered the Nova Twins, and I actually really liked their album. So--

Shawna Potter: I don't know who that is. I'll have to listen.

Ian: Yeah, yeah. Check them out. I think you'd probably dig.

Shawna Potter: Cool. And well, put us on the playlist, dude. Come on.

Ian: Well, it's too late. I've already made it before I found you. But also are you on Spotify?

Shawna Potter: Yes.

Ian: Oh, good. Great. I was listening to you on Bandcamp.

Shawna Potter: Yeah.

Ian: Cool. Then, yeah, the next one.

Shawna Potter: Okay, phew. The next four year old. Teach them young. Well, Ian, thank you very much for spending some time with us and talking about your series and talking about the song. I really appreciate you even during a spinal injury bothering to put on the headphones and chat to some lady you don't know.

Ian: Thank you for having me. Thank you for the well wishes, and thank you for showing me your music. It is actually really good.

Shawna Potter: Aw, high five from Baltimore.

Ian: Yeah.

Shawna Potter: Ping.

Ian: Hi five from Boston.

Shawna Potter: Yay.

END OF INTERVIEW.

Shawna Potter: So I'm hoping if you haven't heard of his video series before now that you will check out all that Innuendo Studios has to offer. Thank you, Ian. It was a pleasure to meet him and chat with him especially considering he had to do the interview on his stomach to rest his back. It meant a lot that he would bother to talk to me at all in that state. And it was a pleasure to just make him listen to our band, this internet guy. That's what all these interviews are really, just a slow and painful process of acquiring one new fan a month. But I'm in it for the long haul, y'all. Worth it.

[Music]

Shawna Potter: The official sponsor of But Her Lyrics is First Defense Krav Maga. So go check them out. You can be a sponsor, too. Join me on Patreon. Support this podcast. Get a shoutout and tons of perks and access to exclusive and behind the scenes stuff by becoming a patron today. So big shout out time to the best patrons in the world, recruits Stephan and Julina, meatheads Melissa, Lauren, Zacharie, Gaelen, Byron, and of course our sponsor First Defense Krav Maga. So patron daughter Julina has a question. She asks, "Were you more nervous when you released your first record or at the release of your latest one?" Well, if we're counting War On Women--Cuz really my first record I made cassettes worth of music when I was like 15 years old, 15 16. I think I've told a little story about that on a previous episode actually. Eek, don't play it for my parents. So I had no expectations. We just had songs that we wanted to get down, and we thought maybe we could sell a couple copies. But it was just our hobby, straight up our hobby. But the same is true for War On Women, now that I think about it. Again, we'd all been in other bands before. It's not our first rodeo. We're all of a certain age. But we just started this little punk band on the side. And we just wanted to get our songs down, so we were able to record at Magpie Cage. It's a nice studio. We did most everything ourselves to save as much money as possible. Our friend Katy Otto put out the record on her label Exotic Fever Records. And that was like an easy no-sign contract kind of handshake deal. But, again, we just wanted to get our songs down. So we didn't really have any expectations, so it was just nice to have--It's just always nice to have a finished product. And I think with the latest album after doing this particular band for 10 years, finishing it in a pandemic I think we just felt good to be able to release it at all. I didn't really wanna sit on it for an undetermined amount of time. We didn't know what was to come, we still don't. So I didn't wanna sit on it until we could go on a tour. But it was weird to release an album when you're not even getting ready for a record release show or a tour, so it felt like a little bit of a letdown once the hoopla was over. There was nothing else to keep us going for a while other than this podcast. Thank you, everyone. But it was also a little less pressure. And so I was less nervous because there was no show or tour to get ready for either. We just got to be like, "Here it is. Here's this thing we made. Okay, bye." So I'd say, strangely enough, I was not nervous for any of these. I was probably more nervous for Capture The Flag cuz it had a little bit more of an expectation on it to do well. Okay, time to hear from the band. What do they think of The Ash Is Not The End?

BAND INTERVIEWS:

Shawna Potter: The Ash Is Not The End. This is a song we've recorded before. You can talk about that. And then talk about this version, how it's different, what you like about it.

Jenarchy: I like this song. It was a new song that was written before--it was before this album. And we submitted it to Adult Swim. So it was really fun to just have this one new song that came up, and I

remember learning it before we were gonna play it at first or something. So it was one of those times where I wasn't gonna get to be with the band and play it with y'all which usually I do a lot of practicing by myself, but then we at least usually play together one time when we leave for tour. And then we'll practice in the hotel room and warm up at soundcheck. I had to learn to sing it and play it, and then we did it live. And I thought it's like a real rocking yelly kind of song. So I already liked it. But then this version on the album, it's like completely re-recorded. A different drummer like Michael had played drums on the old version. He was playing with us for a little while during that time and on that recorded version also that went out to Adult Swim. And so this version is just different. Dave is a different drummer, and we had a lot more time to sit with this song over that year before re-recording it. And that's something that--You don't always get that opportunity. We didn't record all the other songs and put it out and then have a chance to go back and do some revisions. But I think there's always a few things that you're like, "Oh, I would maybe change this or change that." So we got to do that. And so, yeah, now it's even more rocking. And it's got that, "Bite Down!" [Shawna laughs] I really like the chorus of that song too, playing the riff of the pre-pre-nau-du-du-du-du-pre-pre-nau.

Shawna Potter: I am jealous of not being able to play that riff. Yeah. That is one of those rare moments in this band where I'm like, "Damn. I wish I was playing guitar in this band right now." Cuz that riff seems so much fun to sit in it. Du-du-du-du-du. [laughs]

Jenarchy: Yeah. And it's got like a slide, and it's got a little bit of weird timing. And then you sing the backup vocal in the middle of playing that part for the, "It's just all a--" It's a completely different singing rhythm than the playing rhythm for that part, so it's a--Yeah. Much respect to that song. [Shawna laughs] I will bow down to it.

Shawna Potter: Two more songs, let's get through it.

Sue: Yeah. Okay.

Shawna Potter: So The Ash Is Not the End. Any thoughts at all? You know what? I've talked with Jenarchy and Dave about how this was a song that has been recorded before, but I can talk to you about how you sort of gave me the idea or the impetus to write this song.

Sue: I did?

Shawna Potter: You started--Yeah, you told me about some videos on YouTube that maybe help people to combat white nationalism online--

Sue: Oh yes. I was--

Shawna Potter: --or hate comments or something. How would you put that?

Sue: I remember now. It was on Innuendo Studios, The Alt-Right Playbook series which I recommend to everybody. Innuendo Studios, amazing YouTube channel. Really the best stuff. It's basically like, "Here's how to not fall into a trap of alt-right stuff, and here's what they're doing. And here are their tactics, and

so now you know them. Don't waste your time with that shit. And if somebody is going down that road, here's how to help them."

Shawna Potter: Yeah.

Sue: And it's all really just presented in a very clear and just easy--you can show it to your mom. And--
[laughs]

Shawna Potter: Yeah, it's just a helpful resource. And so you sort of pointed that out to me, and so I just started watching some of those videos and kind of pulling lines and ideas that I thought were interesting. And that's how The Ash Is Not the End came together.

Sue: We should send them a copy of the record. What do you think?

Shawna Potter: Oh, okay. Sure.

Sue: [laughs] I think they're based in--

Shawna Potter: Yeah. Why not? They'll be like, "What the hell is this?"

Sue: No, I've talked to them before. I think they're based in Boston. Yeah.

Shawna Potter: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Sue: Whatever. I'll handle that. I am the extremely online person who is constantly watching the leftist stuff and aware of all the weird factions and infighting. I don't know if anyone else in the band goes down that rabbit hole, but I do. Just so you don't have to, okay?

Shawna Potter: Thank you, Sue.

Sue: Yeah. I just wanna give one more plug to this book Culture Warlords, okay? Just came out. Talia Lavin, she's really good. Goes into the detail of the freaking crap that's online and then also gives you resources on how to fight it and fuck it up. It's good to know.

Shawna Potter: [laughs] I like it. Good rec.

Shawna Potter: The Ash Is Not The End.

Dave: Right. So this one--Brooks loves this song. It's his favorite song on the album. And yeah, this is the one that there were already several versions of this song.

Shawna Potter: Yes.

Dave: And then I got to take a swing at it.

Shawna Potter: Yeah. So what version were you listening to before writing your own parts to it or tweaking it in your own way?

Dave: I tried to not listen to it as much cuz I didn't wanna take too much from the other stuff on it. Tried to make it as original as I could to have a little bit of a different approach, but probably the version that I did here was the one that you guys did for Adult Swim.

Shawna Potter: Okay. Yeah, that had Michael Habif on drums who was helping us out at that time on a lot of tours. Another Baltimore dude. And so big shout out to Michael for all his help during that time period.

Dave: Yeah, it's a great drum part. And it's fun to play. It's weird. It's not your basic beat. But, yeah, I--

Shawna Potter: We do like being a little weird.

Dave: Yeah, it's weird. It's good that it's weird. [Shawna laughs] Yeah, it's like a sporadic unpredictable kind of thing. But I'm glad that Brooks likes it so much. I think it's great, too. I know what he means when he says it's his favorite mix. There is something really particular about the mix of this song just sonically. I don't know. It's just like--

Shawna Potter: It sounds different to you than other songs?

Dave: Yeah, it does. I don't know. The guitars are kind of popping out in a different way, your vocals are really sharp, the drums sound great. But, yeah, there is something--I don't know. There's that moment in songs sometimes where you can really hear every single thing that's happening, and I feel like in this song you can really grasp onto each individual part of what's happening in the song.

Shawna Potter: I wonder if it has anything to do with the fact that we had recorded another version in the same studio with J. Robbins and then therefore had something to compare to whereas we didn't with other songs. I'll be sure to ask Brooks about that cuz that is interesting.

Okay, I didn't actually ask Brooks that specific question of why is this mix so good. But I think we still get his opinion about it in a roundabout way, so check it out.

Brooks: Ash Is Not The End is my favorite song on the record.

Shawna Potter: Yeah?

Brooks: Yep. I just think it turned out really well. I love the arc of the song. I think the playing is good. I think the vocals are great. When I listen to our record now, I'll listen to it all the way through. And then I'll go back to Ash Is Not The End just to hear it again. [Shawna laughs] I just really like it. It's got everything. It's got everything in the song that I like about rock songs.

Shawna Potter: What are those things?

Brooks: Well, so the first riff is kind of catchy. But it's an odd phrase, so it's a little off-kilter which you know that I like. It's got a palm mutey sort of driving chorus and a catchy vocal line that's not particularly melodic, right?

Shawna Potter: Yeah.

Brooks: It's like a lot of one note, but there is a really cool thing to it.

Shawna Potter: Yeah. Well, thank you. I don't mean to agree with you. I'll say thank you. [laughs]

Brooks: Especially when the harmony comes in, it gets a lot more melodic. But it just sounds really powerful, and I think you sing it well. And it's got two guitar solos in it which is stupid but cool.

Shawna Potter: How do you feel about that?

Brooks: I feel good because--

Shawna Potter: Were you like, "I gotta have two solos."

Brooks: No, it just seemed like--I never cram something in just to do it. Musically, it seemed appropriate to have a guitar solo before the second verse and to have a guitar solo after the second chorus. Bands like Rolling Stones have three guitar solos on a song. [Shawna laughs] So it doesn't matter. And I like how it changes at the end. That part's really good and layered and really rich harmonically. And I love how the feel changes at the end in the middle of the end. And I love how the end of the song just breaks down to just voice and guitar. I don't know. I'm really happy with the tones of all the instruments. It's just cool.

Shawna Potter: And I spoke with Sue and Jenarchy about the fact that we recorded a different version of the song with Michael Habif on drums helping us all along. Shout out to Michael. After recording that version for Adult Swim, was it always on your mind that we would record it again? Was it just an option on the table to figure out at another time? Were you not thinking about it at all?

Brooks: No, I always wanted the song to be on a full length and get the full studio treatment. The interesting thing, there's been a lot of versions of this song. So I did the original demo cuz we knew we needed a song for Adult Swim. They asked us for a song, so I made that demo. And then we recorded with Michael on drums. And then we did another demo with Dave. And then we recorded it for this record, and so all four of those versions were complete versions. I think that's why I'm so happy that it turned out so well cuz usually when you do a song like that, you just beat it to death and the final version sounds lifeless and boring and you're done with it and you wish it sounded like the demo. But for whatever reason, this song just needed time to grow into what it became. So in my mind I always--In a similar way that we did YDTMHTL we released that as a single on a seven inch. And--

Shawna Potter: The only other time we've done anything like that.

Brooks: Yeah. I liked that song so much that I was like, "Well, it's gotta be on the next record." Same way with this. I was like, "That song is good, and it's finished. And there's no reason that the only way people can hear it is as a single on Adult Swim." So, yeah, I absolutely wanted to record it again as the band that we are now. Cuz I knew kind of what it would become.

Shawna Potter:

That's right. We've only really done this one other time with the song YDTMHTL. So we have some friends in Baltimore that for a little while had a seven-inch series. They are called Girl Problems records. They approached us about putting a song out. And we thought, "You know what? This is a really cool thing. Let's make the effort. Let's write a song for this." And I actually remember the rehearsal pretty well. We were just kind of like, "Okay, let's write a song right now." And we don't often do that. I feel like people come to rehearsal with ideas already. We're not often just fully improving altogether like that. So it was a unique experience all around. We recorded in the back room of the Baltimore Free Farm which has no acoustic treatment whatsoever. Just a big room, big concrete room. So yeah. Very funny, very weird but fun experience. And I barely knew how to sing this song. I had never actually sung it at full volume, and I didn't know if I was doing the right thing. And so I was really glad to have another opportunity to record YDTMHTL later on. So, anyway, I don't know if - we sold out of our copies. I don't know if it's available online anywhere, but you can certainly look up Girl Problem records out of Baltimore, you don't tell me how to live from back in the day. Anyway, keep listening to hear the song The Ash Is Not The End in full. It's off War On Women's latest album Wonderful Hell which you should snag any way you can. Thanks to Brooks Harlan for chopping up our song Her? to create the podcast theme song. You can support this podcast and this band by sharing, subscribing, and reviewing this podcast. It's free, and it helps. And you can do so many things supporting us with a little bit of money, too. You can buy my book, you can buy WOW merch including our new beach towel and matching flip flops. You can learn about upcoming tour dates, watch videos, campaigns, booking whatever, whatever, whatever by going to the War On Women Linktree at linktr.ee/waronwomen. And join my Patreon to help me keep this podcast going. Join in at the seeds level at only a dollar a month. You can also donate annually for a discount or you can donate more of course for bonus stuff like extra episodes, behind the scenes info, and Rosie slideshows. As per usual, I will post my lyric book scribbles for the song on Patreon. But for this song, they are mostly notes I took while watching Ian Danskin videos to research the writing of the song. But you gotta be a patron to see it. And maybe a doctor to read it cuz my handwriting is very bad. We only have one more official song after this. You guys, is this podcast coming to an end? This project to connect with people when I couldn't tour? I don't know. Why don't you tell me? Let me know on Patreon or social media. What should I do after this? What do you want to know? Do you want me to cover more WOW songs? Is it still a podcast? Should I talk about safer spaces? Should I do an advice column? Should I interview people? I don't know. Pending any disasters, I'll be on tour from mid October through the end of November, 2021. We have that long to come up with some ideas. Patrons will get exclusive behind the scenes tour access of the band and as much Alkaline Trio and Bad Religion that I can sneak without getting in trouble. But after that, the future is ours to shape. And I want your input on that. So let me know. And until then, stay safe so we can elbow bump at the show.

THE ASH IS NOT THE END

Bite down

You got your eyes wide open while they're coming in your mouth

You turn your head left to spit

Oh look, you fixed the drought

Bite down

They whisper in your ear

All of the things you've been waiting to hear

Bite down

We know you're a nice guy

And you're not alone

Did we mention that you're right?

Bite down

So it will hurt a little less when they're kicking in your chest

Tell yourself it's just a game

It's just a game, it's just a game

It's all just a matter of time, it's all just a matter of time

It's all just a matter of time, it's all just a matter of time

Bite down

Choose your weapon, cut it fast, cut it clean

If you want the wound to heal, well, first it has to bleed

Burn it down

One way or another, it'll burn

What's it matter to the pawn?

After all, it's just a game, it's just a game, it's just a game

It's all just a matter of time, it's all just a matter of time

It's all just a matter of time, it's all just a matter of time

It's all just a matter of time, it's all just a matter of time

It's all just a matter of time, it's all just a matter of time

So you wanna burn it all to the ground

Like there's no coming back from this?

You fucking quitter

The fire, the embers, the ash are not the end

If you want it, then you're gonna have to build it yourself

So you wanna burn it all to the ground

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