

*First Word Problems*

Failure Anthem get right to the point on their full-length debut album for Razor & Tie, the cleverly titled *First World Problems*. The Greensboro, NC quintet—JD [vocals], Ryan [bass, backup vocals], Kile [guitar], Zane [drums], and Wil [rhythm guitars]—architect eleven impactful, invigorating, and infectious anthems with hooks so robust that modern bells and whistles just aren’t necessary. It’s a tried-and-true approach that feels timeless as the boys make hard rock hypnotic again. Like a big screen blockbuster you can’t turn away from, they don’t waste any time reaching the climax either…

The group began to take shape in the summer of 2013. While working at a local Greensboro studio alongside his friend Drew Fulk and assistant engineer Zane, Kile penned his own music. He spent the day handling recording for everybody from Nightmares to Cane Hill and producing and co-writing with the likes of Motionless In White, while nights were devoted to a new project with Zane, Wil, and Ryan. After watching a Facebook video of JD covering Matt Anderson’s “Coal Mining Blues,” Kile reached out to the vocalist. In between his career as an esteemed chef working under the likes of Wolfgang Puck and Gino Angelini and serving as a Naval Culinary Specialist, JD continually wrote music and performed. However, he returned to South Carolina from a stint in California at just the right moment.

“I saw that video, and I called him,” Kile recalls. “It just made sense because his voice instantly worked with everything we were doing. Everybody felt that it was something special.”

“This is family,” adds Wil. “Kile and I have been friends and played guitar together for over ten years. We’ve all played in numerous bands around town, and we’ve known each other. We all knew JD too, and it simply worked.”

“I’d known Kile for over ten years at that point,” says JD. “He recorded my previous band Written In Blood. I’d been on a journey—living like a gypsy and cooking food. I came back to South Carolina to take care of my mother who had just been diagnosed with cancer. It was a crazy coincidence that I was back and Kile was doing a rock band. The stars truly aligned.”

Joining forces with influential rock manager Larry Mazer, Failure Anthem began to build a passionate regional fan base. They supported Halestorm and Scott Stapp at packed shows and eventually caught the attention of Razor & Tie. With Kile and Drew overseeing production, mixing, and mastering, the band wrote and recorded *First World Problems* in 2014.

Zane exclaims, “Our love for making great rock songs drew us together. We all come from very different backgrounds musically and stylistically, but as a band, we mesh really well, have found of our own, and have a great time doing it.”

“Obviously, we’re a rock band,” declares Kile. “There are a bunch of influences going on in there. We’ll have hints of metal and even an electronic side.”

As a result, a sonic barrage fuels the title track. Augmented by pinch harmonic squeals, intense rhythms, and an overpowering refrain, “First World Problems” properly introduces Failure Anthem to the unsuspecting masses.

“The song is a satirical look at how people complain about the most unimportant things—like their latte being wrong or not having cell phone service,” explains Kile. “It’s a very real issue for this day and age.”

“I ended up living in a homeless shelter when I was in L.A.,” sighs JD. “It’s a hard time living on the streets, and you see what real problems are as opposed to *First World Problems*. This track is a song for us. It’s tough-as-nails and edgy. It punches people in the face and gives them truth.”

On the other end of the spectrum, the powerful “Paralyzed” breaks from an anthemic chorus into a searing solo. “It’s a love song about finding yourself within another person,” JD goes on. “Everything just means more once you find that significant other. I think everybody can feel that.”

Elsewhere, “Leap of Faith” urges honesty with oneself over a thick wall of distortion. The band also open up immensely on the soaring ballad “Here for Good,” which Kile aptly describes as, “your straightforward love song about being committed to a person and assuring her that no matter how hard things get, you’ll fight through it.”

That fighting mentality is encased within the group’s moniker. Ryan explains, “As a band name, mantra, and mindset, Failure Anthem just reminds me that we all have struggles and failures in life, but all we can do is turn them into opportunities to learn and grow from.”

“Failure Anthem has an underdog meaning,” says Kile. “It’s the outlier concept. The person who is allegedly not built to succeed is actually the one who comes out on top. That message is in the music.”

Wil agrees, “I want everyone to find something in our songs that represents a piece of their own story. Our record is a roller coaster of aggression, passion, devastation, loss, gain, triumph, and happiness.”

For Failure Anthem, it’s all about sharing that uplifting message via the songs in the end. “I’d like for people to gain inspiration, knowledge, and strength when they listen to Failure Anthem,” JD concludes. “It’s meant to push you through the day.”

That’s the point of all great rock music…

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