The real story hides below the surface and beneath the veneer.

If you disregard the façade, peel back the layers, and take a closer look, you might get to the truth. The Amity Affliction cocoon raw honesty in haunting hooks, pummeling grooves, and rapturous riffs. The Australian heavy alternative quartet—Joel Birch [vocals], Ahren Stringer [vocals, bass], Dan Brown [lead guitar], and Jon Longobardi [drums]—unearth a powerful truth on their seventh full-length and debut for Pure Noise Records, *Everyone Loves You Once You Leave Them*.

“Social media is so fickle,” asserts Joel. “The internet horde’s response is often, *‘You’re a successful musician. There’s no way you can have depression. Fuck you!’* The other side isn’t always shown. This is a great job, and we’re blessed. Like anything though, it’s not all roses. After somebody dies, you hear the mob say, *‘Oh my God, that artist was such an inspiration.’* I’m sick of the ignorant animosity towards mental illness in music or any profession for that matter. We have a platform. We have the opportunity to say something, so that’s what we’re doing.”

*“Saying something”* remains a reason why they consistently connect. Since emerging in 2008 on the debut *Severed Ties*, the four-piece has preserved this bond. They served up two ARIA gold-certified albums, *Youngbloods* [2010] and *Chasing Ghosts* [2012], and earned a platinum certification from ARIA for the seminal *Let The Ocean Take Me* [2014]. *This Could Be Heartbreak* [2016] marked the band’s second consecutive Top 30 debut on the *Billboard* Top 200, while *Misery* [2018] elevated them to new critical heights with praise from *Medium*, *Alternative Press*, *The Noise.*, and more. To date, the group’s total stream tally has surpassed 200 million and counting. Meanwhile, The Amity Affliction sold out countless headline shows and toured alongside many genre heavyweights. During 2019, the musicians returned to Beltsville, MD to record alongside *Misery* producer Matt Squire.

This time around, they incorporated more guitar and embraced heavier tendencies.

“We went back to our heavier side for the majority of the album,” says Ahren. “We were trying to master the craft and write what we want to hear. Even though we’re older, the maturity comes out a bit more with each record.”

“We just got back to a more of rock guitar sound,” agrees Joel. “We wrote naturally, and it felt great.”

The bludgeoning “All My Friends Are Dead” introduced the record, racking up 1.5 million Spotify streams within a month and receiving praise from the likes of *Kerrang!* On its heels, the single “Soak Me In Bleach” vaults from gnashing grung-y guitar to a sweeping and soaring clean chant.

“The imagery of *‘Soak Me In Bleach’* isn’t something we’d usually use,” Ahren goes on. “It’s super dark, but it’s got a boppy grunge vibe.”

On the other end of the spectrum, the vulnerable “Aloneliness” stretches from electronic-infused emissions into a disarmingly dynamic chorus, offsetting pop palatability with a heartbreaking confession.

“It’s straight-up about being bipolar,” reveals Joel. “It’s the constant struggle to figure out who I am now. It’s the morbid and negative part of my existence. Luckily for me, I’ve got music. I have that daily releasee on tour. I don’t know what I’d do without it. There are individuals who aren’t that fortunate and are struggling to have some form of escapism.”

Fueled by a blast beat and a deluge of screams, “Catatonia” cuts deep. “When we were recording *Misery*, my friend killed himself,” sighs Joel. “We were alone in Toronto. The weather was miserable. His death just hit me like a ton of bricks, and I spent several hours on the floor unable to move.”

Elsewhere, “Forever” sees Joel directly discuss his bipolar diagnosis and *“the balancing act between happiness and despair”* over an unpredictable sonic backdrop. “Coffin” closes tight on *“leeches who want to suck the joy out of everything”* with caustic ebbs and flows.

In the end, The Amity Affliction get real on *Everyone Loves You Once You Leave Them*.

“I want everyone to know there are others out there whose lives look amazing, but they’re still struggling,” Joel leaves off. “Mental illness is uncompromising and indiscriminate. You can’t help it. It’s not your fault. That’s it.”

“I’d love for people to go on this journey with us,” Ahren concludes. “Maybe it could make their day a little better. I live for music; it keeps me going. If we can do that for someone else, that would be amazing.”