**BIO**

Off Road Minivan treat their second full-length album, *May This Keep You Safe From Harm* [Tooth & Nail Records], like a scrapbook. The Hudson Valley quartet—frontman Ryan *“Tuck”* O’Leary [Fit For A King], Evan Garcia Renart, Miles Taylour Sweeny, and Mike Planko—pin memories of real-life experiences to instantly chantable alternative anthems awash in nineties energy and uplifted with a 21st century perspective. At the same time, actual secret recordings of Tuck’s family thread together a nostalgic and nuanced vision. After generating millions of streams and inciting critical acclaim, the group fashion a sonic keepsake out of their own experiences meant to be shared as loudly as possible.

“When my grandfather joined the military and was going off to war, my grandma gave him a bible with a metal cover,” reveals Tuck. “On the front, it said, *‘May this keep you safe from harm’*. Even if you got shot in the heart, the bible would protect you. When I first started touring, different family members gave me mementos to feel safe on the road. The bible was from my grandmother. Now, I’ve got it tattooed on my chest, so I don’t have to bring the original with me. All of this is about preservation of time. It’s a way to document some of my most fragile moments and share the delicate, untouched vulnerable side of myself maybe you haven’t experienced from Fit For A King. It’s the other swing of the pendulum.”

The group first came to life in 2018 with the *Spiral Gaze* EP. On its heels, 2020’s full-length debut, *Swan Dive*, immediately captivated audiences as “Vampire” surpassed 1 million streams and counting. Of the single “YOU,” *FLOOD* raved, *“‘YOU’* is nearly just four minutes of heavy breakdown, pivoting from heartfelt verses to its aggressive dream pop chorus*.”* Throughout the Pandemic, the band members wrote and sent ideas back-and-forth. Simultaneously, they stitched together a throughline carried by the real-life interviews with members of Tuck’s family.

“I’ve been secretly recording my family for at least a-year-and-a-half, including the voice clips from my grandmother who was the first,” he says. “I’d listen back later and find the right part I needed for the album. I essentially wanted to preserve these moments forever. I got my mom, dad, sister, grandmother, brother-in-law, nephew, best friend, and wife on tape. Now, I’ll have it all on vinyl format for the rest of my life.”

They introduce *May This Keep You Safe From Harm* with the single “Basement.” A hummable piano melody encircles hazy production before fuzzy distortion underlines the nostalgic chorus, *“I’ve been sitting in your basement with the demons you’ve been chasing screaming, ‘Come back. Come back’.”*

“Evan was finally talking about the loss of his friend Alex on the song,” he says. “When it was done, he showed it to Alex’s mom to get her blessing. The song isn’t about why they passed. The message is, you’ll just get better, I miss you, and you’re a great man.”

Elsewhere, “Victim Complex” charges ahead on an upbeat groove and propulsive guitars as Tuck screams, *“If I never see you again, it will be too soon*.*”*

“It’s about a person I was friends with for 18 years,” he reveals. “I learned a lot from him, and he was partly the reason why I got in Fit For A King. However, the same individual did a lot of shit. Part of it was due to substance abuse and mental health issues. His personality is extreme, and a lot of people can take it or leave it. Eventually everyone left. He has a *‘Victim Complex’*. The song says, *‘You make bad decisions and treat people like shit. You can play the victim card all you want, but it’s on you’*.”

Then, there’s “Pity Sex.” It explores a one-sided friendship and a revelation of gaining the strength to move on with a swooning chorus.

“This person lives on a lot of borrowed love with very temporary relationships,” he notes. “After we broke up our friendship, I heard he talked so much shit about me. If you’re going to stay around these abusive people and you know they’re going to hurt you over and over again, it’s your own doing. I chose to be done.”

“The Breakdown” turns the frayed ends of a relationship into an emotionally charged anthem with an incendiary hook and melodic bridge, *“When there’s nothing left to give, I’ll give you away*.*”* Meanwhile, “Cheerleader” memorializes Tuck’s friend Victoria McCarthy by name with a tearful chantable refrain awash in dreamy shoegaze guitar.

“She passed away from cancer last year, and she was the person who got me into musical theater—which was a big part of how I perform and why,” he states. “She was such an important figure in my life. I wanted to nod to her and her family. I even got her sister’s approval.”

In the end, Off Road Minivan might just inspire you to take stock of your life and where you’re at—and maybe appreciate it a bit more.

“I hope you call your parents and say you love them and call the person you hate or are having problems with and say, *‘I’m done’*,” he leaves off. “You deserve better. This was me putting a standard out there for myself. I hope you do the same and experience a little healing and solace by letting go of what hurts you.”