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THE 1975

Greta Thunberg is the most legit punk person I've ever met in my life, because it's about conviction. I've never met someone that I believed so much.

PEOPLE

"People" is about young voices of progression being drowned out by old regressive ideals. It comes from a perspective of not just anger, but utter confusion. It comes from a place of "what the fuck are you doing?" It sounds and feels like anger and momentum, like falling forward.

THE END (MUSIC FOR CARS)

I've always talked about the end of this album as the end of an era. These 4 albums, the building of that community to the place that it's in now: the culture, the filters, the haircuts, the tattoos. It was an era. I'm always thinking about where the clean lines are in regard to us stepping into a new era.

FRAIL STATE OF MIND

I've said that my dream song is writing the lyrics of "Hallelujah," but to the music of "I Wanna Dance With Somebody." That idea of happy sad juxtaposition. Melodic garage - like Burial, is my favourite kind of music - the beat and the trappings, the stylistics of everything come from a place that is hard. I do love, for example, "I Can't Make You Love Me" by Bonnie Raitt, but I'm not from there. I love great love songs, but I'm not from there. When I hear "It's Too Late" by The Streets I cry my eyes out and listen to it, because that is my truth. "It's Too Late" by The Streets is like my ultimate vibe.

STREAMING

"Streaming" was kind of incidental. We had a loose, synth ambient piece of music. When we went to record "The End" we arranged this weird avant-garde synth set of noises into musical annotation and gave it to an orchestra to see what they would play. It had no time signature or anything. After playing it for 5 minutes it turned into this generative thing.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

I've always loved country music because it is just emo music. Country music is "I'm going to live and die in this town with a smiley face." And emo music is "I'm going to live and die in this town with an unhappy face." They're exactly the same, just one is about really appreciating your small humble environment, and one is about resenting it.

YEAH I KNOW

We're really obsessed with purpose, so when we're talking about bringing another instrument into an arrangement, we have a conversation about "why?" and "what for?". "Yeah I Know" is a stark example of that - because it's one modular synth sound, one beat and three or four lyrics. It's about confinement and setting a tone and letting people create their own world. I always make the comparison to stand up comedy. The best stand up comedy conveys the biggest ideas in the fewest amount of words. I think I'm always striving to do that. "Yeah I Know" sounds and feels like I wanted it to. We had loads of stuff come in and out of that song, but we never liked it. We just wanted it to be as simple as it is.

THEN BECAUSE SHE GOES

I think when you get a bit older making a new friend is a bit weird. With Phoebe, we started talking on the internet about an appreciation of each other's work and music. I've always been a massive fan of hers. Having other people involved in what I do gives me anxiety a lot of the time, but none of that happened, it was quite casual. It was like finding an instrument for me. She has such a beautiful voice and it created a different tone, one that sat outside of trying to create my own vocal tones. The 1975 has always been very insular and in every aspect, we really let the walls down for this record: my ego, expectations of what we should do next, the way it sounds, the way it looks. I think someone else being on it, a friend of ours sharing the experience, it kind of speaks to what the record is like.

JESUS CHRIST 2005 GOD BLESS AMERICA

"Jesus Christ" was two separate songs. It was a reflection of hours staring out into Nebraska or Omaha or wherever I am on the bus... and thinking "that's a big prison" - or "that's an odd billboard that says god loves guns or god hates abortions." I ended up writing two different songs. One was about the prison industrial complex, and one was about God and the oppression of young people, gay or otherwise. I had these two versions and I eventually cut it up and took what was objectively my favourite line from each version and made a version that feels quite interpretive and subjective, but is also understandable.

ROADKILL

This is me writing a song about being on the road. I have to trust my instinct and write down what comes out, and it's normally stuff that makes me laugh or makes me a bit uncomfortable on reflection. There's a lot in this song that's quite funny. The line about the election is about

the fact that the reason my political statements have worked, is because they've existed outside of the ideas of partisan politics. The fact that somebody was saying "funny that The 1975 are pointing towards the utopia, but they won't tell me which side to choose in the election," that's completely missing the point. It made me laugh. I'm also very busy, which was the joke.

ME & YOU TOGETHER SONG

With "Me & You Together Song," it's almost as if I had to challenge myself. If a song by The 1975 comes on and it feels really uplifting, you can be pretty certain the lyrics are going to oppose that. That tends to be the theme. With this song, it sounded and felt pure and quite naive and the challenge for me was to let it be that. I've listened to that song a lot. I love songs that are really affirmative, like "Vapour Trail" by Ride.

I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Referencing old lyrics is very me, because it's never a different story, it's a continuation of the story. I think postmodernism drives a lot of my work. The idea that a character in a film knows he's a character in a film. The breaking of those walls when I was younger in literature, I always used to be like - "Shit! Real life is this life and they know that I'm watching this and this isn't real." I like that in real life, because that'll spark a memory. I think this is also all that I do, and everything that I am. I can't help but reference it.

NOTHING REVEALED / EVERYTHING DENIED

It's a very unique vocal delivery on this song. I wouldn't call it rapping, it's just flow. I get to kind of flow and rhythmically punctuate with words. I've lied a lot in my life, but in public I tell the truth so I don't have to worry about what I've said. I don't have to keep checking on inconsistencies. I think the option is to either do that and deal with the consequences or have nothing revealed, everything denied where you literally reveal nothing. Say nothing about anything and you let all interest be due to projection or association from other people. If you reveal nothing, then you can deny anything, or you can accept any praise or deny any criticism. I see a lot of people doing that.

TONIGHT (I WISH I WAS YOUR BOY)

Lyrically I wrote something that I thought was quite naive. The plan for it was "College Dropout" Kanye meets Backstreet Boys or Max Martin meets Kanye. It became a captured moment and to leave stuff out because it wasn't that, it just felt insincere. That's part of the story. All of these songs have been part of where we were at the time.

SHINY COLLARBONE

We wanted to reference garage. But if you use real garage samples it's almost comical now as it's so of a time. We found a sample in the Dancehall world with Cutty Ranks. We reached out to him to license the sample and he said "nah fuck licensing, I'll rerecord it for you." So that's what we did. He re-recorded all these samples for us.

IF YOU'RE TOO SHY (LET ME KNOW)

It's got one of my favourite vocal melodies and one of my favourite guitar parts, but the horn part is the part everyone remembers. We've taken everything that's good about the traditional idea of The 1975 and distilled it. So it's the best sax solo, the best breakdown, the best guitar riff, the best homage to 80s teen movie culture. It's the same lyrically as "you said I'm full of diseases your eyes were full of regret you took a picture of your salad and put it on the internet." It's the same thing. We've created an online world where intimacy or sexuality has connotations that it doesn't in real life. Taking off your clothes with somebody you're in a relationship with, being intimate, being sexual, being provocative with your partner in real life has zero connotation apart from intimacy and connection. Doing it on the internet has every connotation, so what is intimacy online? What is expressing yourself sexually online that isn't voyeurism? It's an interesting question and one of the weightier parts of the record.

PLAYING ON MY MIND

"Playing On My Mind" was the track that took the longest, because I used it as a creche for other songs. I wrote so many lyrics that I would pluck out and put on other songs. I just kept cannibalising it and using it as a drawing board for lyrical ideas. It started as little folk guitar riffs and it became a song in the end. I didn't actually have the verses to start with. I'd written all the other bits and Phoebe was there, and I thought it'd be weird to have her not do a harmony in the verse - so I wrote the verses and sat in the room with Phoebe. The verses are me pondering ideas in the moment, "will I live and die in a band, will I get divorced?" It's literally called "Playing on my Mind."

HAVING NO HEAD

"Having No Head" is George's long form statement on the record and it's amazing. I'm completely in awe of it to be honest with you, it's my favourite thing on the record.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY

It was really hard to finish, really difficult to know what it was like. When we heard the female vocal, the synth chorus we thought that's really powerful, but what is it? Is it a chorus or is it a verse? Is that an intro? We just couldn't figure it out. The female vocal was the start of the puzzle and it was the thing that kept us going with it, because we loved that but everything else we tried didn't serve that moment well enough. You've got to remember that when these things actually exist, it's like they always existed, but when you're working on them, they could

be anything. "What Should I Say" is a result of us never figuring it out. It's just a series of big blasts of forward momentum.

BAGSY NOT IN NET

If you're playing football and you say "bagsy not in net" it means I'm not going in goal first. "Bagsy not in net" is like shotgun for the car. We were listening to music and "Sailing" by Christopher Cross came on. I remember saying to George - "Do you remember back in the day when I said this would make an amazing garage sample" and we kind of looked at each other like "fuck." The album was so clean cut to us at that point that the sample just sounded like it was on the album. It was so easy to write and record because we loved it so much. That's one of my favourite songs on the album. I love the feel of that beat, I love the fact that it only does one thing.

DON'T WORRY

I didn't write this song; my dad wrote it in the 90's. It's the only 1975 song that I'm not credited as a writer on. The reason I put it on the record was because I was going through what influenced me, and that was the first song I ever knew. There were never any recordings of it, it was just his song we'd play on the piano. I hadn't heard it in about 15 years, and I thought I'd imagined it being better than it was. He played it for me, and it was fucking amazing, so we sang it together and it was this amazing captured moment. I think as I grow up, I let my guard down. Being sentimental is something that English people struggle with, but it's not something I'm going to let affect my art, because that's way bigger than personal fear or being embarrassed. This record is testament to that. Opening it up to my family or friends is where I'm at now. The investment in those kinds of relationships is what's really important to me.

GUYS

Songs are very pointed at relationships and how formative those experiences are, but there's not many songs about non-romantic relationships and these can be the most formative experiences. I wanted to write a love song for my friends. It's also looking back and appreciating what we've done, because it is the end of an era. It is different as you get older. You realise that you lean on your friends, and the more you do it the more you realise you couldn't have done this without them. I've had the same best friends since I was 13. The fact that I haven't written numerous songs about that is probably more ponderous, one would think.