

## STAIN D

AARON LEWIS – vocals  
MIKE MUSHOK – guitar  
JOHNNY APRIL – bass  
JON WYSOCKI – drums

In the ever-unfolding and expanding musical lives of multi-platinum Massachusetts-based band STAIN D, **CHAPTER V** opens the book on a new phase of their journey. The 12-song album, produced by David Botrill (Tool, Godsmack) features the first single, the classic, mid-tempo and dynamic “Right Here,” as well standouts like the edgy, dark “Falling,” the poignant, retro-feeling “Schizophrenic Conversations,” and the soaring “Everything Changes.” **CHAPTER V** is classic Stain d, songs ranging from forceful to quiet, from industrial-tinged to melodious, often within one song, with singer **Aaron Lewis**’ instantly recognizable voice heartfelt and fervent. Lyrically, Lewis isn’t afraid to look deep, and what he finds—the good, bad and ugly—is translated into soul-baring songs that he often agonizes over. “I’m my own worst critic,” Lewis admits. “The personal songs; it’s a way for me to get those things out, because I wouldn’t feel comfortable saying them to anyone. I’m pretty bad about being an internalist—I hold everything down and then explode. It’s better for everyone around me that I put that explosion down into lyrics rather than just exploding on somebody. “

As for where **CHAPTER V** fits into the band’s legacy, Lewis puts the CD into perspective: “It’s the fifth chapter of feelings in a six-year long book; a narrative of feelings. The title makes people go, ‘wait a second; Dysfunction, Break the Cycle, 14 Shades of Grey, Chapter V... that’s only four?’ So it will make people look for the fifth one.” (Which, for the record, is 1996’s independent release, TORMENTED.) On Chapter V, as on previous albums, Lewis says, “Lyrically, I always try to be as perfectly vague as possible. I mean, do you really want the director’s exact interpretation of what the movie is given to you?” That said, it’s clear that Lewis does lay bare his emotions, and on the album’s apt closer, “Reply,” those are feelings of thankfulness expressed to the band’s legions of faithful fans. In the song, Lewis sings, “So thank you for the letters that you thought you wrote in vain / And for the times you choose to stand out in the rain and wait for me ... The life I live would never be the same, without you here.”

Many of those fans have been with Stain d for more than 10 years. It’s been a decade since Stain d played their first gig in February, 1995, and the ensuing years have been an escalating cycle of musical and personal growth and increasing success, without the accompanying blown-up egos that destroy so many bands. TORMENTED, Stain d’s self-released debut, came out in 1996, and, playing the New England area over the next several years, the quartet came to the attention of Limp Bizkit’s Fred Durst, who facilitated Stain d’s signing to Flip/Elektra. DYSFUNCTION came out on the label in 1999, achieving platinum-plus status thanks to songs like “Just Go,” “Mudshovel” and “Home.” A cut on the FAMILY VALUES TOUR 1999 CD, “Outside,” featuring Lewis and Durst, became a #1 rock single, while a hit version also appeared on Stain d’s next album, 2001’s BREAK THE CYCLE. That CD entered the Billboard Top 200 albums chart at #1 and has sold more than eight million albums to date. The songs “Fade,” “For You,” “Epiphany” and “It’s Been Awhile” from BREAK THE CYCLE made the band certified superstars, with “It’s Been Awhile” spending 16 weeks at #1 on Billboard’s Modern Rock chart.

A gold-certified MTV Unplugged DVD followed in 2002, with 2003 seeing the release of 14 SHADES OF GREY, a CD that was praised by the New York Post for its “intense, propulsive melodies,” the CD lauded as a “slow-burn collection” with “staying power.”

Staind felt 14 SHADES OF GREY was their high-water mark to date, but were ready for the challenge of beginning work on its follow up in 2004. Band co-founder **MIKE MUSHOK** found that the process of making Chapter V played into the album’s ultimate sound. “We did our last two records (BREAK THE CYCLE and 14 SHADES OF GREY) with producer Josh Abraham, and we were thrilled with them, but we felt it was time to change things up; maybe take it somewhere different and get a new outlook.” Staind recorded drums at Alaire Studios, in a bucolic setting outside Woodstock, New York, moving back to their hometown for Springfield, Massachusetts into an empty fourth floor of an office building they made into their own studio for the rest of the album. “There has been progression from record to record; some were greater than others, and I think this is one that has made a larger step,” says Mushok. “We were able to capture what we do better than we ever have before. We can still play more aggressive songs, yet softer and prettier stuff. The highs are higher, and on each song, I asked myself, ‘what can I do to make certain parts jump out, how can I add textures or layers that make me –and someone else – want to listen to it again?’ When you listen to it again, you’re like, ‘I never heard that little melody dancing around in the background! The first time, they’ll hear the riffs, then the lyrics and melody, but later, they’ll hear other things going on.”

Bassist **JOHNNY APRIL** also found that working with producer Botrill pushed the band to new sonic heights. “A song that would normally take me four hours took me a whole day with David. He was going for perfection you couldn’t even tell yourself,” recalls April. “He’d dissect the attitude I was playing with, and I’d be like, ‘isn’t it good enough yet?!’ But it was really cool; it was like being under a lab microscope. He has been our hardest-to-please producer, but that’s not a bad thing.” April feels the sound on Chapter V is “a touch brighter,” and is happy with the dozen songs on the CD, even though three stellar songs were cut from the album so the disc wouldn’t run over an hour. Additionally, Staind choose not to do go the popular route of recording a cover song for their record. “We’re glad we don’t *need* a cover song—we have enough ideas so we don’t need to stick one in there,” April concludes.

Like his bandmates, drummer **JON WYSOCKI** left no stone unturned while recording CHAPTER V. “I pushed a lot harder on this record with my playing. With technology, you can make anything sound good, but we don’t fall back on that. Bands with mediocre talent can sound good (with technology), but live is where you see if they have ‘it,’ so we rely on our own skills in the studio.” While he acknowledges that the music industry has changed over the life of the band – record companies closing and merging, technology improving, and public tastes changing and fickle – he says that Staind “remain true to what we do. This new record is where we’re all at right now as a band and as people.”

That being the case, a careful listen to CHAPTER V will reveal some of Lewis’ inner workings and current fascinations. Though he says it’s hard for him to grasp the fact that people hang on to his every word -- and he takes that responsibility, but not himself, seriously – he is unafraid to write what he feels. An example is “Paper Jesus,” a song he hopes is not misconstrued. “After listening to this song, I think people will wonder whether I’m against the Catholic religion, and

I'm not," Lewis explains. "It's just that you're not supposed to be a piece of shit all week long, then go to church Sunday and make it all better. The song is questioning what organized religion is and what it should or shouldn't be." On "Paper Jesus," the massive, aggro opening and double-bass drums of "Paper Jesus" melds into an intense, catchy, multi-layered chorus that perfectly suits Lewis' passion for the topic.

Mushok is equally passionate about his contributions to Chapter V. "When you're in the studio and working on something you take extremely personally – I mean, you can make a joke about my mother and I'll probably laugh it off, but if you don't listen or pay attention when I'm playing, I get really pissed!" Mushok's playing on the Chapter V is a departure from previous outings. "I've always used a lot of altered tuning and I pretty much played a baritone guitar, and a lot of tunings based on that," Mushok explains. "This time, I wrote a lot of the baritone, then found out I could play them on a standard guitar. There were songs, sonically, which sound different, or set apart from other records, because of the guitar."

Lewis, too, is thrilled with the guitar work—both Mushok's and his own. Lewis says: "On this record, I played guitar on almost every song. I'm really excited. I've felt, over the years, that some songs were missing a particular guitar line, so I'll probably attempt to learn those guitar lines that Mike wrote on an entirely different kind of guitar!"

Staind is happy with the growth evinced on Chapter V, and while they know fans worship Tormented and Dysfunction, to mine similar musical or lyrical territory would be to regress, Lewis feels. "My life, up to a point was shit," begins the frontman. "But I've come a long way. I grew up in a trailer park in Vermont. That was the shit I got out of me in Tormented and Dysfunction, and tailing into BREAK THE CYCLE. But the title, BREAK THE CYCLE, says it all." Still, Lewis admits on Chapter V, as with every new record, he feels apprehension as the process begins: "The beginning of Chapter V I was feeling uninspired. But pressure helps me out. I set myself up to be under extreme duress. The only record we've ever done that I've been ready for was the first one." But as the dozen songs on Chapter V bear out, the pressure certainly worked to the band's advantage. In some ways, the song "Falling" sums up Lewis' – and the band's – development and current state of mind, as he sings, "the falling is easy, it's getting back up that becomes the problem." Lewis concludes: "I can't keep talking about how easy it is to fall. Life is about getting back up and brushing yourself off after the fall."

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