



It's a hard scene to get out of your head - singer-songwriter Jeff Heiskell in a sexually-charged wrestling match in the dirt by a campfire with both men wearing overalls and spooky emoji masks. The scene is a pivotal moment in the video for *I Want More Life*, from Heiskell's new album, Emotional Terrorism. "The question is 'What's Jeff gonna do once he's got him down on the ground?'" says Heiskell, chuckling. "When I ask friends what they think about the video they merely say, 'Well, that's really you'," which is so disturbing!"

Yet, who would really expect anything conventional from Jeff Heiskell? Of course he takes the sweetest love song on the album and fills it with images and scenarios that make your skin crawl just a little. Heiskell has been

a provocateur since emerging on the national scene in the late 1980s as lead singer-songwriter in the The Judybats. The songs, "Being Simple," "Daylight" and "Don't Drop the Baby" all found a niche in college radio. The band released four albums on Sire Records before disbanding at the dawn of the new millennium. After a short stint fronting a group called Doubter's Club, Heiskell spent several years avoiding music altogether. Then, in 2006, he returned with "Soundtrack for an Aneurism," "Clip-On Nose Ring" in 2008, and "Arriving" in 2015. The songs have only gotten deeper and more honest. They're also, increasingly, more openly sexual. However, Heiskell does not fall into anything stereotypical. Emotional Terrorism is a rock record and there's not a hint of "I wish I was in New York or San Francisco" any more than the artists who recorded at Sun Records sound like they could've been making music anywhere other than Memphis. Being from and living in East Tennessee is as much or more a part of Heiskell's music and identity than any other element. Listen to the trashy country number "Whiskey Lick" and you'll understand. It's funny, but it's not a joke. "I recently googled 'gay music' and 'alt gay music' and I was appalled. Saw nothing there in common with me or my music. But then I'm 55 years old and putting out a gay alt-rock CD" – laughing – "Who does that?"

On "Emotional Terrorism," Heiskell took control more than he ever has. "This is the first time I've ever had a project that I felt the confidence in being there for every single ding," he says. "On these recordings there was nothing done without me physically in the room." "During the time I was writing these songs I was working out at a small local gym with the only music being an old boom box. I listened exclusively to '70s rock - Elton John, Heart ... I didn't realize how much '70s rock was stored in my mind. There's a part of my brain where it's eternally 1975 and 'Born to Run' is playing on the jukebox 24/7."

"This is my favorite thing I've ever done," says Jeff. "I didn't give myself any kind of timeline. We remixed some songs 12 or 14 times. I put all kinds of perverse stacked background vocals and some yelling on tracks simply because I think it's what the song wanted and mostly just because I wanted to." Heiskell again worked with brothers Jason Ratliff (drums) and Bo Ratliff (bass), and guitarists John T. Baker and Gray Comer of Arbor Studios where the album was recorded. For the video, Heiskell enlisted Douglas Stuart McDaniel of Storyhaus Media. Filmed mostly in Heiskell's home as well as outside a crumbling country store on a piece of family property in Niota, TN, he adds, "Every time I do an album it's the a big personal outpouring. This one may be the most personal yet, especially the video. There's so much emotional baggage down there in Niota. I believe fans of my past work will enjoy it."

Wayne Bledsoe, music writer with the Knoxville News Sentinel and host of the WDVX shows "All Over the Road" and "The 6 O'Clock Swerve"

EPK: www.heiskellmusic.com