

SHALLOW LIFE

WALDEMAR

When a band becomes popular, there are many people that just come to the studio, clap you on the shoulder and say, "You're so great." At this point, I'm under no illusion that there was quite a bit of money around and I don't doubt also that the band might have thought: "Let's work with someone who would have been our dream producer, ten years ago." So that's what happened. Not just that, the timing was perfect for them to work with someone else anyway. Evanescence became very popular, almost overnight – to the extent that many people were telling me, "I heard the new Lacuna Coil song. It's all over the radio." Except, it wasn't Lacuna Coil, but they profited out of Evanescence's popularity—and that's the kind of break a band sometimes needs in its career. I

OPPOSITE

Press shot, 2009



LACUNA COIL



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Photo by Enrico Caputo



don't mean it negatively at all; it was a door that opened, and you can only be thankful for that. All of that was behind the break up between Lacuna Coil and me. The rest is for the history books.

Was I disappointed? No. We worked for a very long time together. It was one of my longest relationships in the music business. It was never a question of my work not being good enough. And quality is hard to prove anyway in the music business. It's not like if you're a motor mechanic where you have to prove you can repair a car because when someone picks the car up, it is either repaired or it is not. In the music business you can talk for five days and deliver total bullshit. Worst of all, too many people believe that kind of approach nowadays.

OPPOSITE

Got Guinness?, Dublin, 2009

During that time the release of *Karmacode* – and especially the single 'Enjoy The Silence' – really helped our profile back home in Italy. That song was huge in Italy so there was always a special connection, which meant that every mainstream radio station that had never played Lacuna Coil, or even metal, would play that song. Consequently, our shows sold out and in general we were on the map because of just that song.

ANDREA

When we parted with Waldemar, there's no doubt that we were pretty sure about both our style and how to make records. Because of that, we were understandably cautious about bringing anybody new into our close community. Yet we still needed someone. We weren't ready to go at it totally alone.

CRISTINA

There came a point when we decided that we'd search for producers who had done records that we all liked. As part of that, Don Gilmore's name came up. As well as Linkin Park and Evanescence, Don had worked with other bands that were heavier and who we liked. So, eventually, we arranged a meeting and he came to Milan one afternoon to get together with us in the practice room. Right away, we clicked with him as a person, plus, he made good suggestions straight away. At that point I think that we were looking most of all for experience.

LOW

As much as we all love our ideas and our music, we still wanted that outside eye to view things differently because, as a band, you can be too much in love with your own work to get a proper perspective.

Backstage at D&G's Gold for the 'Spellbound' videoshoot

ANDREA

There were two or three people on the list at that time I seem to recall. Then it came down to who was actually available in the time window we had set aside to make a new album. As it turned out,



Don Gilmore agreed to meet us in Milan while he was in Italy on vacation with his wife. We met one night, went out for dinner – and then the next day he came to the practice room in Marco's basement studio to listen to some of the demos we'd been working on.

Immediately we liked him. It was obvious straightaway that he'd worked with big bands and was very experienced. But he was also a really nice guy, which is always as important to us. We decided to work with him, albeit with some degree of trepidation given that firstly, he was coming from a very different environment and, secondly, we were so accustomed to working with Waldemar.

DON GILMORE

I'm pretty sure the connection with Lacuna Coil came about in the same way as everything does: through my manager. Usually a band asks how they can best contact me and, given that this was a little before the whole social media explosion, people would usually find out who represents me and go from there. Initially all I heard was that this band wanted to talk to me and that they were Italian. I have to confess that I didn't know a lot about them, but I started talking to their manager and listening to their stuff, whereupon I was told that they wanted to try something a little different to what they had been doing in the past – and that they wanted to do it in L.A. I liked their music and when they asked me if I wanted to come over to Milan I thought, "Yeah, of course."

I went over, had dinner with them and we talked about what their goals were. As we talked, I spelled out some of the broad areas that I thought I could help them with.

CRISTINA

Working with Don Gilmore on *Shallow Life* made a huge difference to the accessibility of our songwriting. Essentially, he told us that we should make our message as easily understandable as possible if we wanted to connect more to our listeners. From our perspective, I'm not sure that we necessarily wanted to connect to the listener so that we sold more records; we just wanted them to be able to get even more

BELOW

Backstage of 'I Won't Tell You' video with director, Saku in Milano, 2009

into the songs because we'd be talking about concrete rather than abstract subjects. That said, *Shallow Life* is not my favourite record – simply because the stylistic change was a little too drastic in relation to *Karmacode*. We needed to experiment to some degree and to get out of the box and the songs came out the way they did. It was a necessary transition to do something silly and to do funny videos.



DON

From what I could hear of the demos, while all the musical parts were all in place, the songs hadn't really been completed lyrically. None of this is particularly uncommon. Oftentimes artists will only address complete lyrics while a record is in production. I told them that if they wanted to do something different and wanted to compete with rock bands in America, they would have to be much clearer lyrically about their subject matter. They needed to be understood perfectly, even though they all spoke pretty good English. They clearly wanted to have a big song on the radio and I felt like they thought I was the guy who could help them.



After the initial meeting in Milan, which I thought went really well, I went back to the U.S and, soon afterwards, my manager said, "Yeah, they want to hire you." I said, "Cool!" And we started planning how to make it happen.



Historically Marco came up with the demos and then Cristina and I added the vocal lines – sometimes without worrying too much about the actual meaning. It was clear that Don wanted to change that.

ANDREA

His suggestion was that we didn't always need to use the most complicated words in our lyrics. In fact, in our initial meeting he showed us how the use of simple words, strategically placed, could be most effective in dragging the listener into the story we were trying to tell. He also stressed to us the importance of not trying to sing in either an American or British accent, given that we were neither American nor British. His focus was on *clarity* – to the extent that he wanted anyone who heard us on the radio to be able to understand every word we said.

ABOVE

Everything is bigger in Texas, 2010



SHALLOW LIFE

unfortunately, they don't play instruments, just like I don't sing. And I play all the instruments, very badly. Only then we are ready for the studio.

DON

They came to L.A and we worked out of a rehearsal room we'd hired for the week. Then we did pre-production going over arrangements, maybe made some songs a little shorter; we were focusing on the 'big blueprint' aspects of the songs rather than the finer details of each one. Consequently, at certain times I felt that they were thinking, "Well, when are we going to start that?" I had to tell them, "Trust me on this. Let's get this part right first."

So, they'd rehearse, and we'd get the band perfecting little changes I suggested and they were generally very receptive to that. Marco is the music guy. He's the one who writes everything. A few times when we were making changes on a song, he and I would have to go over it a few times while I explained the purpose of the changes. And really it was simple: these guys had been making records their own way, but their intros would always be unnecessarily long. They weren't in the same radio world that I was, so I always had to remind them of why I was there by saying something along the lines of, "If radio is what you want, this is what we have to do."

MARCO

Working with Don Gilmore was completely different as compared to working with Waldemar. Just working with a guy from L.A as opposed to a Polish guy who lives in Germany is different enough. Don was coming from working with huge names such as Avril Lavigne and Linkin Park, his vision was very different compared to the one we had of ourselves. When he began cutting the more metal parts, the riffs and the parts where Cristina and Andrea didn't sing, I must admit I started getting anxious. But then I understood his method in structuring songs, and I understood that cutting out parts can make a song more radio-friendly and accessible also to people who aren't musicians. I realised I still had so much to learn about music.

Today I can say that thanks to Don I've learned to appreciate and listen to other musical genres that until then, stupidly, I didn't even consider music.

MARCO

Normally I write the music, then I write it on Logic so that Cristina and Andrea can get a full picture of each song and can say if they like it or not. Once they've found ideas for the vocal lines they come back to my basement studio and we start working together. When we have definitive vocal lines, in my opinion the most important thing in Lacuna Coil, I go back and alter the music to support these vocals. I have to do it this way because

ABOVE

Live in London for Kerrang! Week In Rock, 2009

Funnily, to thank him for his contribution on *Shallow Life*, I found the time during those 3 months in L.A. to build a commemorative statuette of a pair of scissors cutting a pick, with a plaque reading : "Presented to: Don "Scissorhands" Gilmore from Lacuna Coil, Best Reducer 2008"!

DON

We all got along fine. In any case, in the creative world, I know that it's absolutely okay to have some discrepancy and some arguments. As long as people really believe in what they're fighting for, as Marco always did, then that's even better. If someone is saying, "No, I don't want to change this at all," it make me in turn think, "Maybe this is a good thing after all, and maybe we shouldn't change it."

Even though my aim was to hone Lacuna Coil's sound, the songs were still very complex. I don't feel that I was tearing too drastically into the music, but I do feel that certain songs needed to be cut down in length in order to accentuate the parts of the song that are exciting.



Sometimes, if something is too long, the audience just goes away. But they were clearly good songwriters. I just think they needed to be around someone who could give them confidence.

MARCO

Don and I had no conflict at all on *Shallow Life*. I absolutely loved working with him. I saw it all as a learning process. I had to accept that I knew nothing about American rock radio, so I decided to shut up and learn as much as possible and we ended up having a lot of fun in the process. The way Don works is very relaxing anyway. He's extremely professional, but he also likes to enjoy his life too. But in the studio, it turned out that he and I shared a few similar views about music. In general, I don't give a fuck about the actual instrument; I just want the final result to be right. The songs have to sound as good as possible and it doesn't matter how that's achieved. With Don it was never a case of, "OK, you're a bass player, now you have to make a song with a bass solo." People want to listen to a *band*.

DON

When we started working on lyrics, Cristina, Andi and I would break off from the rest of the band. While they were doing overdubs, we'd go into the lounge at the studio to work on lyrics. I'd come up with something and sometimes they'd go, "Hmm. What does that mean?" I'd tell them – and then we'd go around and round, throwing ideas around. They really embraced the process; we had a good thing going on.



ABOVE
Awarding Don with the Best Reducer prize, 2009

OPPOSITE
Andrea with merchandiser Noel enjoying a successful night in London, 2009

ANDREA

Don encouraged us to collect a lot of new phrases, cool words and names that could be used in songs. We created a book full of phrases, manners of expression and interesting concepts. And then when we were laying down the demos we referred to the book as we went. Because many of these words were new to us, we really struggled with the pronunciation sometimes in the studio –we also had to make sure they were in the right key and tempo, of course. Unsurprisingly, we had to redo a lot of them!

CRISTINA

Sometimes you're so in love with your idea that you think that it's the best thing you've ever done. But Don would say something like, "But have you considered that you might also be able to approach it in another way? If you try it three or four more times, maybe you'll get it." At first, I was getting pissed off and thinking, "No, no – this vocal line is amazing, I'm in love with it." Then, when I tried again I'd come up with something that was a thousand times better. It was cool to have that outside point of view – and Don always gave us that perspective. It's just like if you're very good at cooking and then someone teaches you a different way to cut the carrots and onions. Then you have to say, "I used to cut them my way, but I didn't know this method. I'm going to use this method going forward. Thank you very much."

DON

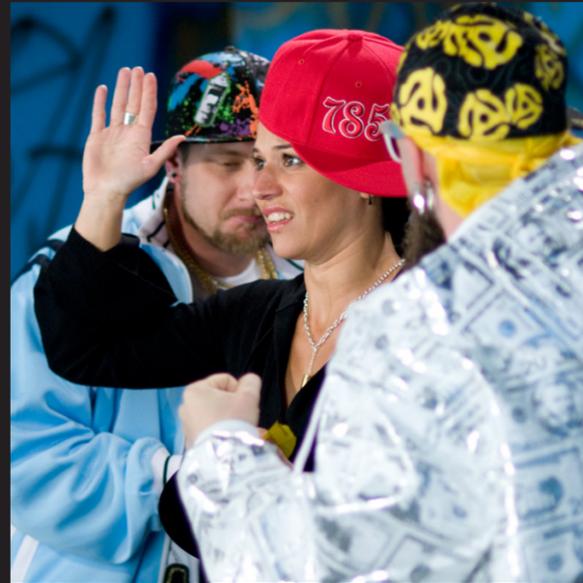
Cristina is a great singer and likes to do things more than once. There were a few times when I said, "That's great. Good job", and she'd say, "No, I want to do it one more time." And I'd be like, "Well, we have it. It's done." And she'd be, "One more time..." That happened a lot.

ANDREA

With *Shallow Life* we wanted to represent the superficial existence that society was living on one hand. And on the other we played with our image a little by taking on some new characters. In hindsight that was a mistake because the metal crowd genuinely thought we were changing

our image to become a rap band. They didn't catch the funny side of it and it was possibly a little naïve of us to assume that they would. After all, every little change for us is a big change for the listeners and the fans. We had no sense as to how much we had shocked them at the time – and we got a lot of negative comments about it back then. It was all a learning process and we realised then that you've got to be really careful when you're mixing humour with metal. We could have done things differently, but it's too late to regret! It is what it is, and the record did really well in terms of getting new fans with songs like 'Spellbound.'





THIS PAGE

Backstage of 'I Like It' videoshoot in Kansas City, 2009

There was a loose concept behind *Shallow Life* and – on reflection – I think we went a little too far with that. The basic idea at the time was to comment on the superficial aspects of how life can be sometimes – how stupid some things in life are and the reasons why people attach so much importance to stupid things. The reason for this angle was probably due to the fact that we were all in a pretty happy place in 2008. None of us had any major worries or problems; we were all living a lite-life, if you like – and the songs reflect that. Unfortunately, the fans don't always want that; they're often looking for the drama in life.

CRISTINA

Shallow Life was a commentary on life as we saw it at that time. We were perhaps being ironic, but I think some of the fans didn't get it. We played it all the wrong way and got people confused. We wanted to make *fun* of the superficial life via songs like 'I Like It', but in doing so we played too much with our image to the extent that people genuinely thought that was 'us'. Maybe we weren't ironic or sarcastic enough? Instead of seeing that we were poking fun at pop stars and rappers, I think some fans thought, "Oh my god. Who do they think they are? They want to be Britney Spears?"

MARCO

I've always thought the video for 'I Like It' is fantastic. We had a great time making it. But, if you think about Lacuna Coil, I suppose you don't think of a video like that. We were just trying to have fun, by being sarcastic about the superficial stuff. The way I look at it is that, in the career of any band that has a degree of longevity, there will always be that record that kind of confuses people. I don't want to compare us with Metallica but it has happened to them too. If an artist is willing to evolve and experiment and is interested in music in general as we all are, I think it's absolutely normal, sooner or later, to do a record that is different from all the others.

CRISTINA



BELOW

Cristina backstage of 'I Won't Tell You' videoshoot

OPPOSITE

Marco, Don and Andrea in the NRG studios working on Shallow Life, Los Angeles, 2008



DON

That song ("I Like It") is really cool. I like it when artists push the boundaries a little bit. At the time I didn't know whether their core audience would understand that, and the impression I get is that maybe they didn't. Of all the others, "Spellbound" always really stood out for me – not least because of how it evolved. As I recall, it was one that was finished later in the project, and there was a point where we couldn't really come up with the chorus. I felt like that was such a bummer because the song had great energy – to the extent that I could definitely see it being a single and perhaps the first song on the record. But for a while it wasn't getting there...

Then, in stepped Marco with this whole Italian thing of the food, the cooking and the arguing about the recipes. That was something that is as important to them as their music. One night, Marco said, "Hey, why don't you come over this Sunday? We're almost at the end of the record and I'm going to make dinner for everyone at the apartment." I say, "OK, cool", I show up there, we have a couple of bottles of wine while Marco, a fantastic cook, lays on this huge spread. Meanwhile the whole argument ensued over the wine; it was a standing joke between us. We Americans like our cabernets that are very fruit-forward, but they just aren't into that at all. "No, it's too sweet!" they'd always say – and these were very nice bottles of wine I was bringing them. So, we had musical arguments, then our food arguments and then our wine argument. This night was no different except that we talked about 'Spellbound', found that key word, and then put the chorus together. And then the few lyrics that weren't there in the verses came together really quickly. The next day, we went in and finished the song.



CRISTINA



By this point I was feeling conflicted about the identity of the band. Having experimented on *Shallow Life* with both image and sound, it occurred to me that we are an undeniably weird band. We have an identity, but at the same time we want to try something different, as if to destroy the barriers that the music industry inevitably creates around us. On some levels we don't want a fixed identity because, for us, it's better to incorporate new things here and there. And beyond that we want to write the music we like without ever becoming a cliché. It would be much easier for us to be a typical goth band, always dressing the same way with the same makeup the whole time. By doing that we'd be more recognisable within a specific genre, with one type of fan. But we are just not like that, and I am not like that as a person. One day I like to dress up and be this total dark lady. Then the next day I'm this sporty nerd that likes to play video games. And I love this multitude of personalities I have inside, and that the other guys have at certain times. I think it's cool if we bring this to our music; it's what makes Lacuna Coil special. Yes, you can call us a Goth band because the reviewers considered our early music to be Goth. But we're not – because there are so many elements musically and visually that are anything but Goth.

I sometimes like to compare us with a band that we love, but who obviously are nothing like us and that's Faith No More. They've done so much and are amazing – but it's really hard to describe them. They're just Faith No More. I like to consider us as a band with the same mentality.

DON

ABOVE

Happy Birthday
Cristina! Knitting
Factory, Spokane, 2010

OPPOSITE

Andrea and Cristina during the
Music As A Weapon Tour,
2009

My relationships with bands are always on a, "Let's see how things go" basis. I don't like to sign up to multiple album arrangements. Being a producer, and the sort of person I am, I usually jump into my next record. I'm kind of a hermit too; I don't really go out and see bands. I definitely don't do the 'grip and grin' thing as much as I should and sometimes a band just goes off after you've worked with them. Most of the time you don't know if they even like the record you did with them or were happy with the experience. The conversation never happened with Lacuna Coil – and then, all of a sudden, their manager reaches out to my manager saying that they wanted to find out if I was interested in doing another record with them. I love these guys, so it was easy to say, "Well, yeah!"



DARK ADRENALINE

ANDREA

Shallow Life taught us a lot about where we belong and, equally, where we don't. Consequently, with *Dark Adrenaline* we were conscious during the writing process to be committed to the direction we wanted to go in. There was little in the way of experimentation, simply because we didn't need to.

OPPOSITE

Press photo, Milano,
2012





CRISTINA

With *Dark Adrenaline* there's a story which connects all the songs together: we thought about this imaginary liquid that, when injected in your veins, allows you to go on a mental trip to different places that aren't real. It's not a concept in that you can still listen to the songs separately, but there was a story that *inspired* all the songs.

ANDREA

In truth, after *Comalies*, we could have pretty easily stuck to the same formula and churned out essentially the same record, time after time. But we're just not that kind of band. We went to *Karmacode*, which is more extreme and complicated, and then *Shallow Life*, which was more radio friendly. Our current mood and the things that we experienced before each writing process begins, usually serve to inform how that record turns out. In the case of *Dark Adrenaline*, the

songwriting process was preceded by what seemed like an endless touring schedule. In reality it was almost eighteen months on the road.

Over the years we've learned how to manage the potential excesses that are available to a band on tour. We pushed it just like anyone when we were touring *Comalies* and *Karmacode*; the parties and the late nights were part and parcel of the touring life – simply because we were young and pumped by success. But the more you live it, the more you realise that, while there is a space for partying, it isn't everything. Even today we still party – but it's important to be clean, normal and have a good balance in your life. Otherwise you very soon find yourself on the bottom.

For me one of the hardest adjustments after a long tour was coming home. In the beginning you don't really know where your home is, so when you come back you miss the adrenaline. On tour you become so accustomed to timings: wake-ups, sound-checks etc. Your life has

BELOW AND OPPOSITE

Recording vocals and overdubs for Dark Adrenaline at Can Am Recording Studio, Los Angeles, 2011





a certain schedule. But once you're home you have to do all the normal things like going to the bank and going to the post office. Nowadays we're better at it – and have learned to enjoy being home, seeing friends and family and doing normal things. I also like going to the gym and watching soccer – I'm a huge fan of AC Milan. I'll go to the games whenever possible and, if I'm on the road, I've always tried, no matter where I am or what time zone I'm in, to find a way to see the game. The team connects me to home.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

Marco celebrating after the Rock on the Range show (opposite), Columbus Ohio, 2012



CRISTINA

I never had a problem reconnecting with friends and family after a long period of touring because I've always been that person who'll text, chat and send mail. I always want to know what's going on back home! What was sometimes weird was seeing things changing in Milan in our absence. Maybe there's a building that wasn't there a month before. Maybe there's a shopping mall that didn't exist two months before. So, while the friendships always remained the same, it felt like the surroundings were always changing around us. I've always been blessed by great friends who understand what I do, anyway. They love me for who I am, not because I'm in a band or have my face on a magazine cover. In fact, they don't care about that at all and that grounds me. Outside of music I like to keep my life very, very simple. Because I don't often have a lot of time, that time flies by so quickly. Even if I have three weeks off, in a couple of hours it feels like all the time is gone because there are always things to do. When I can, I stay with my friends; we go to dinner or the movies. We all love to eat, and we take great enjoyment from that.

BELOW AND OPPOSITE

Backstage from the bonus videos available on the Deluxe version of Dark Adrenaline, 2011



When I'm not working I like going to the pub to drink beer. I used to be an athlete and I still like sports. Obviously when I was younger I was much lighter! Nowadays I like to snorkel when I go to the seaside and I like taking walks in the mountains. I even really like going to the supermarket to buy stuff! I can go there for hours because I look at it as an escape from jail. Plus, I really like to buy food because I was a chef and still love to cook. I also used to like painting miniatures, but I don't have any time anymore. I don't even have time to play video games. Really, I can have fun with nothing, that's why I'm sometimes sad when I'm in the basement all day every day. And free time passes by so quickly.

MARCO

FRONT



BACK



FRONT



BACK



I grew up with a dad, Blake, who was a big fan of classic rock: REO Speedwagon, The Eagles etc. All of this was driven into my D.N.A from a very early age. Then, around the age of thirteen when I was in the seventh grade, a good friend of my sister was in the band Papa Roach. They kind of took me under their wing, took me to a couple of concerts and gave me the VIP treatment. Well, that was pretty much it for me. I thought: "Yeah, I want to do this too."

The first time I picked up a musical instrument was in fifth grade when I played the trumpet. I was OK at it but totally uninspired. At the time I had some friends who played the saxophone, so I switched to that and became very proficient up until high school where it was not in any way cool to say you play the saxophone. All my friends were playing guitar, bass and singing, trying to be in bands. One of my friends had a drum set, so within a year I persuaded my parents to get me a drum kit and from there it was pretty easy. I had private lessons, and from that point on drums took over my entire life. If I hadn't done that I've no idea what I might have ended up doing. For some while I'd envisaged myself as an engineer but there was no reason why I should have believed that to be my path given that I disliked maths. As much as my parents struggled with the idea that, by the age of sixteen I was basically done with school, they were at least comforted by the fact that, in the drums, I'd found something that I was truly passionate about.

The first band I got into in earnest was called Takeover. I was just out of high school, and was in that band for just over two years during which time we made a pretty good go of it. We auditioned for labels, did some tours and put out a record. On some level it was great, but on another it was a little disillusioning in the sense that every kid imagines that you play one concert, get signed – and the rest is history. That was my first real world experience of the realities of being in a band: making a budget, making t-shirts, making sure that we sold those t-shirts so that we had the gas money to get to the next show. As difficult as it sometimes was, it was all a welcome reality check that motivated me to move forward.

Takeover disbanded in 2007, and at that point I did a full press on every contact and personal relationship I'd ever made to see if I could find my next thing. I was living in Spokane, Washington at that time and let's just say that the music scene there doesn't really exist. I hit everyone and

RYAN BLAKE FOLDEN
(drum tech 2009-2012, drums 2012 - Present)



ABOVE
Patch design for Dark Adrenaline stage outfits.

OPPOSITE
RYAN BLAKE FOLDEN, Milano, 2017



gettyimages®
Jason Squires

said I'd do anything freelance for anyone. I said I'd move, I'd travel; just let me know where to be and I'll be there type of thing. At the time I had some friends in the management and booking industry who were going to the National Association of Music Merchants convention (NAMM) so I bought myself a plane ticket down to L.A and crashed every party I could and gave anyone my email that would take it. And it really wasn't long before I received a call to audition for this band out of Tulsa, Oklahoma called The Agony Scene. I ended up moving down there and playing with them for the better part of a year – all of which helped me accrue more contacts in the industry. They put out a record, did a bit of a push with it and then the guys said: "Alright, we're done."

Again, I hit up everyone with, 'I'll set up, I'll tune, I want to be at a concert and then I'll go home' type of a thing. Then my friend Tracey Weideman, who I'd met at NAMM, hit me up when she was coming through town with Marilyn Manson. I went to the show and asked her to keep me in mind and the very next day I got an email saying, "This band Lacuna Coil needs a drum tech." I knew about the band because I'd been a fan of *Headbanger's Ball*. The re-edition of that show was smack in the middle of my senior year in high school, so I was something of a big fan. It's hard not to sound biased – especially now that I'm in the band – but Lacuna Coil are one of the few groups of genuine people who exist in the industry today. I don't mean that negatively about any of the bands I've been in, but all the bands I was in prior, without exception, have had some form of hierarchy about who takes credit for what, and who is responsible for what, to the extent that it often squashes the creativity. Lacuna Coil is not that way. Marco is the songwriter and always has been. But at the same time everyone sits at the table and everybody has a say. If one person has a problem in some aspect of their life, whatever it is, everyone will consider that as if it's their own problem. That especially applied on tour. The first time I went on the road as a tech, I was just twenty-three when they were all in their mid to late thirties. Regardless, they treated me with total respect. There was no place I couldn't be; it was a unique feel to know that the employers and employees all operate on the same level

LEFT

caption to come



I was much more certain of myself. And there were some minor differences of opinion this time around. For example, on 'Trip The Darkness', when Don first heard the song, he insisted in changing the heavy part of the intro. He said, "To me this is a great radio song. But the intro is too heavy." He wanted to adapt it by using bass and synth in a very experimental way that might have ended up sounding like something Muse would do. Me as the bison that I am, put my head down and told him, "No, I will *never* change this part." Right up until the end when we started the mix he was still trying to persuade me. It was all a lot of fun!

'Intoxicated' is a song where Don's help was essential and important. It's the only song on Dark Adrenaline that relied completely on his input. Basically, the song wasn't ready, and he added some good parts with which we built it up with him in the studio. To me it came out as one of the best songs on the album because Don came up with a chorus and a simple verse. I consider his approach of "less is better" in music as genius. I always learned something new from Don with each record.

BELOW

Sketch by Marco for the cover of 'Trip The Darkness' single, 2011

OPPOSITE

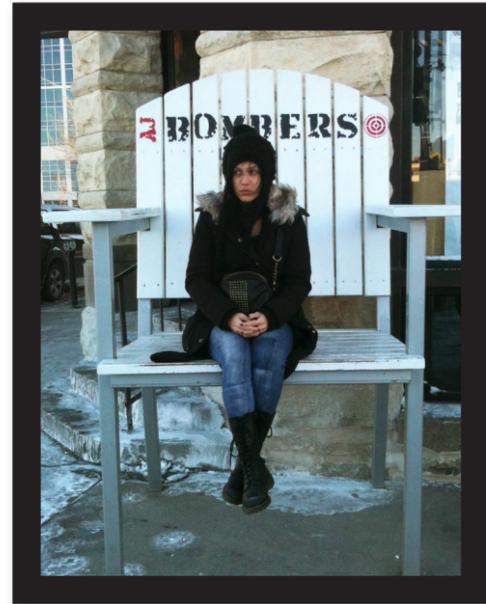
(top) Press photo, Milano, 2011

(bottom) Alternative artwork sketch by Marco for Dark Adrenaline, 2011

MARCO

When Don heard the songs, he said: "Wow, I want to do this album as well, even if there's not a lot left to do." We took that as a real compliment and I felt like I really needed him again anyway. As it turned out, I didn't need him as much as I thought. While we were still working with the same producer, *Dark Adrenaline* had a completely different approach from *Shallow Life* – not least in the sense that we recorded the bulk of the album in the Officine Meccaniche studio in Milan. Only the vocals were recorded in L.A at Can-Am studios. The reason for this was that, as far as I remember, Andrea wanted to record vocals there. Musically *Dark Adrenaline* was very different from its predecessor *Shallow Life*, but it also sounds completely different because I mixed it with Marco Barusso at Aisha Studio. The result is a distinctly European-sounding metal mix – which is in contrast to the overtly American radio hit mix of *Shallow Life*.





ABOVE

Day off in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2012

BELOW

Digital single cover designed by Marco



DON

I didn't influence making the songs shorter on *Dark Adrenaline*. I think Marco picked up on that from the first record [that we did together] and ran with it. I'm not obsessed with length unless there are boring parts – only then do I get a little upset. 'Trip The Darkness' was a real favourite of mine and because they'd had a lot of success with a cover song in the past, I thought that 'Losing My Religion' could have maybe done that for them, too. When they played it for me I thought, "Great! This is going to be so much fun to work on." There were so many great songs on that record: 'Give Me Something More' is great, 'I Don't Believe In Tomorrow' was awesome. 'End Of Time' is a beautiful song. Sometimes you know, "This is a standout," and 'Trip The Darkness' kind of was.

ANDREA

It was a good decision to work again with Don. On *Shallow Life* we struggled at times, simply because we didn't know each other. He was more hands-on, trying to push us to do stuff that we weren't always convinced about. On *Dark Adrenaline*, we knew each other – and that familiarity meant that he understood exactly what we were about and what structures we wanted. From that perspective, *Dark Adrenaline* was the perfect album with him. It was what *Shallow Life* could have been had we all been more synchronised. We approached it all in the right way this time around, by starting in Italy and then finishing the vocals and arrangements in L.A.

MARCO

Even when I did 'Losing My Religion', I came at it not from a place of attempting to be commercial. I'm much more interested in creating my interpretation of the song, bearing in mind too that I knew Cristina didn't really like it. It was just another experiment because it was a famous song.

It's not that I don't like REM. While they're not by any means my favourite band, it was the song that irritated me. By the time we covered it, I was just so tired of that particular song. Italian radio stations, when they like a particular song, play it over and over again. So, after a while, as good as it might be, when you hear a song every day for thirty years straight, eventually you start to hate the song.

CRISTINA

BELOW

Pizza live during Dark Adrenaline tour, 2012



ANDREA

We hadn't put a cover version on *Shallow Life*, so we wanted to bring that idea back. In considering what to go with, we wanted a song by a very well-respected band, from an older background, but with lyrics that were still in keeping with the mood of our record. We also had half an eye on whether we could make a darker version that was different enough to catch people's attention. To that end, the version of REM's 'Losing My Religion' fitted the bill perfectly

CRISTINA

We wanted to add something visual to the record – especially given that the idea behind the album was pretty strong. We knew Saku because he'd made the videos for 'Spellbound' and 'I Won't Tell You'. So, for the special edition of the album we included six videos directed by him, the first of which was mine, where I was injected by this substance called dark adrenaline and thereafter kidnapped by myself. All of this gave us the scope, having seen and approved the scripts first, to go down a cinematic path which had a strong medical influence with overtly medical visuals too: doctors, syringes, the colour white, etc.

Having given it thought since, I think we went down this path because, obviously, we were no longer twenty-year olds. Inevitably, as you get older, you start thinking about more serious things: existence, pain... death – things that you don't think about when you're younger. I think it was very effective.

OPPOSITE

Sketch by Marco for limited edition of *Dark Adrenaline*, 2011

ANDREA

I suppose the *Dark Passengers* clips that accompanied the digi-pack for *Dark Adrenaline* in some way made sense given our shared fascination with fantasy and horror. It started with this crazy story where Cristina was injected with a substance which then took us on this path of horror clichés that we'd all been drawn too: dreams, nightmares, visions – all created by this substance. It was a natural direction to try and explore by bringing back the memories from all those years where we all spent so much time enjoying horror and cinema in general. The cover image was self-explanatory, showing these vials of dark adrenaline. And then there was a very limited edition version which came in a medical-





style metal briefcase containing vials, a pen in the shape of a syringe and medical notes that contained the song lyrics. Marco's prints were also included; it was a very cool concept.

DON

I'm just into the songs. The artwork and the concepts; I'm not really involved in that aspect although I do remember that they were trying to figure out the name for the record and Andi – who seems to be the guy that comes up with the names – referred to the song 'Intoxicated', where there's a lyric about an adrenaline rush. Initially they asked, "Well what does that mean?" And I told them what an adrenaline rush was and his eyes lit up. He said, "I don't know what it is, but I like the sound of it." I believe that's where the album title came from.

ABOVE

Press photo, Milano, 2011

I love the black and white video for the song 'Nothing Stands In Our Way'. It came about in a random way because this guy, Daniel Kuykendall, was just following us, filming for his own benefit on the road. He asked, "Can I follow you all day long and shoot stuff?" And we said, "OK". Then when we saw the results we thought it represented exactly what we're like on tour: a happy family that fights all the time – particularly Cristina and I. It is what it is. A lot of bands split or have two different tour buses or separate dressing rooms – yet they call themselves a band! Because we fight and make up, it makes us stronger. We really are a band.

MARCO

When bands hire techs, it's normally a goal to hire one who doesn't have the ambition to also be a player. The two tend to get in each other's way. I wanted to be a tech and wanted to be in the industry – but I also wanted to establish myself as a musician, which is sometimes very difficult. For a while there I was thinking, "Alright, let's learn the tech thing." And there was a big learning curve in terms of the set-up disciplines. Fortunately for me and unfortunately for Criz, he hurt his foot six weeks into a tour. They didn't know what to do and were going to have to cancel, so I offered to play. And they were nice enough to say yes. I played that whole show in Winnipeg in 2009, while he was there helping tech for me, bless his heart. Thereafter I continued to tech for a couple of years, as well as being in two other bands. I was flying from Lacuna Coil tours to play with these other bands – all of which took its toll on me.

RYAN

BELOW

Sketch by Marco for tour merchandise, 2011

Later, when the band were out on the road with *Dark Adrenaline*, they started looking for a fill-in for Criz, whose wife had had a baby. Not only did I fill in on tour and tech for myself obviously, but I also persuaded the guys to bring out the other band I was in, This Is She, on the road with us. I was juggling two worlds, but somehow, I managed to pull it off! From that point until now, even though Criz was in the band, I've played almost every live show. Not to sound rude or inconsiderate but that was my goal when I took the tech job in the first place. By the end of that tour I got married in Italy and my wedding party consisted of the band.

