



Golden Mixtape

WE'RE ALL ONE TRACK AWAY FROM COMPLETING OUR MIXTAPE.

The Heaven Sent Delinquent Shawna Virago

AUGUST 21, 2017 by SUNNY MENAGERIE



Not too long ago [Shawna Virago](#) finished up a summer run treating the Midwest to her latest *Heaven Sent Delinquent* alongside Secret

Emchy Society and the Utah Phillips. Now she's back home in San Francisco working on new music for the next project she'll push out, as well as planning her new video release. We talked about that a bit but really dug deep into living as and supporting the underdog, her latest single "[Last Night's Sugar](#)," how she controls the stage and more.

Kendra: We can surely hear it now, but even growing up were you the kid who always stuck up for the underdog?

Shawna Virago: I was often the underdog kid being an androgynous kid not into sports, but as I got older and fueled by punk anger and a stronger sense of injustice, I definitely stuck up for those being bullied and harassed. I have a very low tolerance for bullies of any kind, whether they're drunk frat bros, groping truck drivers or a corporation full of sharks.

Kendra: Now transgender is something that isn't new at all but is something that mainstream media and America seems to be just be taking notice of in the past few years. Being that you were being true to yourself back in the '90s, do you feel that no matter when – you still would've faced the same uphill battles as transgender artists are today?

Shawna: It's hard for me to gauge what it would be like to come out now. When I started playing music, I was usually the only out transgender person in the club or bar for years, which led to some very tense situations, especially, as I mentioned in the question above, staring down groping truck drivers. It seemed the bigger the rig the more overcompensation they had to do. But it's still a struggle for trans artists today to get respect.

[Last Night's Sugar by Shawna Virago - OFFICIAL MUSIC VIDEO](#)

Kendra: You've never seemed to shy away from singing about whatever the hell it is you want. When it came time to write and record *Heaven Sent Delinquent*, did you say everything you wanted?

Shawna: I think I've said what I wanted to say on this album, which is really about a previous generation of queers and how underground our lives were and how we found each other. I also needed to call out conservative Christianity and its myriad on-going abuses of queer and trans youth and that was a strong thematic motivator, especially on the songs "Heaven Sent Delinquent," and "Holy Rollers."

Kendra: Where were you mentally when "Last Night's Sugar" came to mind?

Shawna: I was in a melancholic mood, that's for sure. That's a song of heartbreak, longing, dealing with economic downturns, a prayer for better times.

Kendra: When you get up on stage you're singing, telling stories, really making people listen. Where did that showmanship come from? Because some singers can get up there and sing but that's it. They can't really hold your attention.

Shawna: That's a good question and I don't really know where the performance fire comes from. I'm a very unschooled performer and don't think much about stagecraft or persona. I guess the devil just gets hold of me and I can't turn it off.

Heaven Sent Delinquent

Kendra: Music has always been a great way to express yourself, so if you had to make a mixtape consisting of songs that were all about being loud and proud of their cause, what five would have to be on it?

Shawna: When I was wooing my partner fifteen years ago, I made a huge mixtape of songs that I hoped would seduce and inspire mutual attraction. Fifteen years later we're still happily together and I like to think these songs, the first five on that tape, had a big hand in that:

“Fight The Power” – Public Enemy

“People Got The Power” – Patti Smith

“God Save The Queen” – Sex Pistols

“To Have and Have Not” – Billy Bragg

“Holiday In Cambodia” – Dead Kennedys