



# MIKE ADAMS AT HIS HONEST WEIGHT

## CASINO DRONE

RELEASE DATE : May 20, 2016

CATALOG # : JNR193

AVAILABLE FORMATS : LP / CD / digital

GENRE : Indie, Indie Rock, Alternative

BOX LOT QUANTITY : 10 LP / 25 CD

PACKAGING : jacket / wallet

VINYL NON-RETURNABLE.



LP UPC: 714270689789



CD UPC: 714270689772

### TRACK LISTING :

1. Bronze Worlds	4:00
2. Hobart, Chuck Manson and Jim	4:00
3. The Lucky One	3:56
4. Stainless Still	3:45
5. Underneath The Door	4:28
6. Frozen Car	4:03
7. Diem Be	3:18
8. Smart Marks	4:39
9. On The Fumes	3:26
10. Keep My Heart Alive	3:46
11. Ideas Man	7:18

### Mastered by Matthew Barnhart

(Superchunk, St. Vincent, Bob Mould, Destroyer, the Dodos, The New Pornographers, CHVRCHES, John Vanderslice, The New Year)

### PRESS

"[Mike Adams] manages to come across as both ironic and deeply sincere, goofing on the conventions of pop music even as he embraces them as a means of communicating some deep pain."

— Stephen M. Deusner, *Pitchfork.com*

"even as he spins slack, major-key melodies, you sense it's the most powerful coping device he's got...Mike Adams at His Honest Weight creates a song of extremely deceptive heft."

— Ian Cohen, *Pitchfork.com*

"Modern underground pop with just enough of what made yesteryear's sounds memorable to stick the landing."

— Zac Camagna, *Styrofoam Drone*

"Mike Adams is a nice guy."

— Justin Spicer, *Tiny Mix Tapes*

#47 "Best Songs of 2011" (Top 100)

— Amazon.com (*I'm Not Worried*)

#47 "Best Songs of 2014" (Top 50)

— American Songwriter (*I'm Worried*)

### OVERVIEW :

On *Casino Drone*, his third solo album, Mike Adams at His Honest Weight emerges as both a Hoosier power-pop auteur and a poet of the Indiana everyday. He crafts supremely catchy melodies and fashions ingenious arrangements that thrum with synthpop sparkle, shoegaze drone, classic rock fervor, and sonic textures that draw from easy listening as well as avant garde experiments. And it's all in service to sharply intelligent songs balancing whimsy and melancholy, exuberance and doubt. It's an album about the fabric of ordinary life: listening to the radio as your car heats up on a winter morning, waking up next to the same person for the rest of your life, getting a hug from your son. Each line is shaped like a question mark, as he poses queries to himself about himself and his surroundings.

"I feel like a self-appointed torchbearer," he says of his home state. "I want to turn what's good about the Midwest into something that's artistically valuable. I don't want Indiana to be left behind. I want to be a part of it and try to make it better."

Indiana couldn't ask for a better pop emissary. Born in Claypool (population: 311) but based in Bloomington, he paid his dues in a handful of indie pop bands before going solo with 2011's *Oscillate Wisely* and 2014's breakout *Best of Boiler Room Classics*. Written during a dark crisis, the latter builds upon the sounds and themes of a diverse array of influences, from Jimmy Webb and the Beach Boys, the Cure and Guided by Voices: songs about pop music as a balm in hard times, our favorite music as confessor and comforter.

"I have a strange relationship with music in general," he says. "That plays into my weird perspective in life too. I love music and I especially love a catchy hook, but I don't care about music unless it speaks to me."

Music remains a dominant theme on *Casino Drone*, but Adams has subsumed those influences into a sound that is more idiosyncratic, more ambitious, more personal—in short, more *Mike Adams*. The long ambient opening passage of "Ideas Man," the weightless drift of "Stainless Still," the tangle of guitar notes anchoring "On the Fumes"—these aren't nods to his pop heroes, but the musical signatures of a confident artist who has come into his own.

That's nowhere more apparent than on "The Lucky One," which is among the strongest songs in Adams's growing catalog. After the chugging chords in the intro, he delivers a melody so clear and direct and so instantly memorable that you'd swear you've been humming it your whole life. The song pauses for a ruminative instrumental interlude, as though Adams is providing a blank for listeners to fill out: *INSERT YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE HERE*.

*Casino Drone*, he says, was more difficult to make than either of his previous solo efforts, partly because there was no crisis to prod his creativity, no weight to get off his shoulders. Life had returned to something resembling normal: He and his wife bought a house and raised their son. He started hosting a web talk show and toured the country. While he would never complain that life was too good, he did

feel something gnawing at him, worrying him in the middle of the night. "I got everything I ever wanted, and I'm still restless," he admits. "I've been struggling to have this adult life, and I'm there. I'm at that point. Now what?"

*Casino Drone* is his attempt to answer that simple question. It's a meditation on the everyday life as something epic, with songs documenting quiet moments of contentment as well as the nagging uncertainties that dog everyone—whether we ever admit it or not. "I still have this streak of wanting to be ornery, wanting to be tricky, even if it's just on a recording. I don't want to settle down, I guess, in spite of settling in."

Making pop music has allowed him that outlet. Adams recorded these eleven songs himself, demoing ideas and recording almost all the instruments in his living room. He booked studio time only for the drums. "I went in and recorded the drum tracks in double time," he explains. "Then we slowed the tape down so that they would be at the speed I had written the songs. That created this unusual foundation for everything, which created this pitched-down, slowed-down, dreamy sound."

He then painstakingly built the songs up, one instrument at a time, experimenting with arrangements and textures while disregarding the verse-chorus-verse strictures typical of most pop songs. When every little thing was in place, he sent the tapes off to his old friend and long-time collaborator Adam Jessup, who as producer tweaked everything and made it sound just so. "This record feels bigger," he says, "but there's actually much less going on. Everything is simplified. Everything is sharpened. I wanted these songs to stand up without any tricks."

His lush arrangements are anchored in the perfectly normal and sometimes weird world around him. Even the song about cult leaders avoids any kind of sensationalism. "Hobart Chuck Manson and Jim" is about three charismatic believers with ties to the Hoosier State: Jim Jones was born in Indianapolis, where Charles Manson spent time in juvie (before escaping and heading west!).

But the most interesting may be the most obscure: Hobart Freeman is the cult leader around the corner, a man who established his radical ministry in a house not a mile from Adams's home in Claypool. "I didn't know a lot about him, but my family would talk about his place, the Glory Barn. They would hold these wild prayer meetings trying to heal sick members, and they had several babies die at the church. It mysteriously burned down right before he died. It's a crazy thing."

The song is more than merely a trip deep into eerie Indiana. It's a means for Adams to explore the vagaries of faith and hope—our common need to believe in something bigger than ourselves. For him, it's pop music. His unwavering belief in the restorative powers of a good hook or a snappy riff—"Faith heal me back to where I belong!"—has inspired one of the finest pop albums from Indiana or anywhere.

— Stephen M. Deusner



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