



## ELEGANT WEAPONS

*Horns For A Halo*

*Release Date: May, 26<sup>th</sup> 2023*

**Line up:**

Ronnie Romero – Vocals  
Richie Faulkner – Guitars  
Dave Rimmer – Bass  
Christopher Williams – Drums

**ELEGANT WEAPONS online:**

<https://elegantweaponsband.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/elegantweaponsband>  
<https://www.instagram.com/elegantweaponsband/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/@ElegantWeaponsBand>

Talk about Firepower.

That is, of course, the name of the JUDAS PRIEST record that represents guitarist **Richie Faulkner**'s finest moment with the legendary Birmingham band, one that **Richie** – also British – has been central to for 11 years now.

But that also describes the happenstance that is **ELEGANT WEAPONS**, with **Faulkner** being bolstered and emboldened by the regal presence of **Ronnie Romero** — RAINBOW, VANDENBERG, MICHAEL SCHENKER—along with **Dave Rimmer** from URIAH HEPP and on drums, **Christopher Williams** from German Metal veterans ACCEPT.

But why **ELEGANT WEAPONS**?

In almost any endeavour, the craftsman needs the right tools for the job. For a musician, those tools are things like their instruments, their voices and the emotions that the right combination of all those can bring to the surface. You can also consider it a reference to the instruments we play, because they're almost antiquities now. So yes, it references our

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instruments and also this kind of music, where we're carrying on the tradition of the greats like SABBATH and DIO but also bands the guys are connected to, like RAINBOW, PANTERA and PRIEST."

It's inspiring that **Richie** is forming this new super-group, not to mention even being here to explain it. On September 26, 2021 in Louisville, KY, **Faulkner** suffered an onstage aortic aneurysm during the performance of the band's "Painkiller" encore. Somehow finishing the set, **Faulkner** was rushed to hospital and put through ten hours of emergency surgery. "My other half actually got told by the surgeon to prepare herself that I wasn't going to make it and that it was the worst dissection he'd ever seen. I'm just lucky to be alive. And luckily we had a short set that day. We were playing before METALLICA, so we had an hour set instead of an hour and 40 minutes, in which case I wouldn't be talking to you. I wouldn't have come off that stage alive. The stars aligned: that was the last song and we were four miles away from the University of Louisville's Rudd Heart and Lung Center, which is one of the most well-renowned heart hospitals in the country."

And so **Richie** is here — "They say I'll be 100% by Christmas" —and so is **ELEGANT WEAPONS**, with a finished record ready to unleash upon lovers of traditional heavy metal worldwide.

Again, underscoring the sense of firepower in this intriguing new band, **Richie** speaks to its esteemed constructors, beginning with **Rex Brown**. **Richie** and **Rex** have been friends for years, so when **Richie** was recording the album during the pandemic, he called on his friend to record the bass for the album.

"Well, **Rex** brings a sound, first of all, that is like no other bass sound," explains **Richie**. "The way he plays bass is instantly recognizable. But I got involved with **Rex**, you know, as with a lot of things that we do, as humans, really—we got involved as friends first. But **Rex** has got a great way of hearing the way the bass parts and the drums interact together. I mean, **Rex's** parts just breathe grit and life and dynamic into the songs. So it's a pleasure to have him on the record and it's a pleasure, obviously, to know him and have him as a friend—he's a legend." When it comes to the live show, there was no one else even considered other than URIAH HEEP's esteemed bassist **Dave Rimmer**. **Davey** and **Richie** go back over 20 years and they played the bars and pubs of London and England together, night in, night out for many years. Their musical relationship is almost telepathic in the way they communicate, from that early hard graft together on the circuit. "**Davey** is an untouchable player. In sound, style and presence. A killer writer too, contributing great songs with URIAH HEEP. A great friend and a great musician."

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“Yes, well, when I joined PRIEST, it was on a farewell tour,” reflects **Faulkner**. “I remember **Glenn** telling me he wishes he could tell me it was going to be ten 15, 20 years, but it wasn’t. In retrospect it has been two records already and 11 years, but that was never the plan. So it was always in my mind that this farewell tour is probably going to be the only one I’ll do with PRIEST and it would be prudent, really, if I started thinking about what I’m going to do afterward.”

As far as the drums, I always wanted to make a record with **Scott Travis** playing on it outside of priest. His technique and style are legendary but also his groove.”

When it came to choosing the drummer for the touring band, it was a no brainer for **Richie** to enlist fellow Nashvillian and good friend **Christopher Williams** on the tubs. **Christopher** had played and recorded the initial demos for the *Horns for a Halo* album, and was the obvious choice for the drum position. A phenomenal player, a great personality and a consummate professional.

And finally there’s the new hotshot on the scene, **Ronnie Romero**, Chilean-born, now living in Eastern Europe. “**Ronnie’s** got that heritage,” says **Richie**, “and he nailed his parts in a week, which was a testament, really, to how good the guy is and how perfect he was for it. And he’s just such a lovely guy, and, I think, one of a dying breed. There’s not many people like him. There’s good singers, like **Halford** and **Dio**, but there’s not many of them. He’s really something special. When he sings with RAINBOW, he sounds obviously like **Dio**, but when he sings this stuff, there’s something in there that comes out of him—he’s his own monster, with his own trademark quality, which is an important thing to have.”

Producing is highly regarded PRIEST, OPETH, MEGADETH, SAXON and ACCEPT producer **Andy Sneap**, who has been respectful of **Richie’s** vision concerning a certain classic sound he wanted across the expanse of the record’s 11 songs (ten originals plus a cover of UFO’s “Lights Out”), and that is a signature Flying V through a Marshall Plexi amp.

“With the Marshall Plexi I’ve kind of gone back to the ‘70s, really,” figures **Faulkner**. “And, you know, it’s just one channel. And I’ve been using a prototype Flying V by Gibson, a blue Flying V with signature pickups, which I had been using on the PRIEST tour. I used it on the whole record, every track. So it’s pretty straightforward technology-wise—the Flying V through a Marshall on 11.”

As for the music, **Richie** describes it as “a mix of JIMI HENDRIX, PRIEST, SABBATH, solo OZZY and BLACK LABEL SOCIETY, but with a lot of melody, sort of old school and modern at once if

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that makes any sense, and actually down-tuned a whole step. The Marshall Plexi basically does one thing, but you've got to crank it to 11 for it to have that distorted sound. It hasn't got a lot of bells and whistles on it or different channels and effects. It basically does one thing and does it very well. But again down-tuning creates more of a modern sound, and by using the classic sound of the Marshall Plexi, you get that juxtaposition, that contrast. All told, there are a lot of guitar solos and the songs are on the heavier side. And even though there's a lot of melody, it's still going to shake your bones."

Specific to the songs, **Richie** explains that, "Me and acoustic don't really get along, so there's only one mellow song on it, a sort of smoky, haunted, New Orleans kind of tune called 'Ghost of You,' with de-tuned 1920s piano on it. That one is about a memory, or ghost of a lost love. But that's about as acoustic as it gets. I'm not really attracted to acoustic guitar in general. It's mainly kind of heavy and full-on, really. There's a song called 'White Horse,' plus 'Horns for a Halo', which is like **Tony Iommi** crossed with ALICE IN CHAINS. That's about the way we justify the bad things we do. When we turn up on Judgement Day, will the angels kind of confuse our horns for halos, if you know what I mean. Then there's 'Rose Girl,' which has a bit of a psychedelic '60s hippie vibe. It's about the rose girl who sells roses to the patrons at a strip club, and reflecting on what her life is all about."

Besides having these stories told, another mandate of the band is for **Richie** to propose more fully than he can across a PRIEST record, his own voice or style as it pertains to the guitar. "Yes, everything that you do, without sounding pretentious, is trying to find your own voice and extension of your voice. I've been in cover bands all my life. Then you find yourself replacing **K.K. Downing** and it's like, 'Now what am I gonna say?' I can't sound like **K.K. Downing**. I can't sound like **Eddie Van Halen**. I can't sound like **Zakk Wylde**. So it's refining and honing what your voice is, constantly fine-tuning what that voice is. And hopefully when people listen to it, they'll think, 'Oh, that's **Richie**.' In every song and every solo hopefully there's that sound, that narrative, that voice, and hopefully it stands the test of time."

But really, the over-arching mandate with **ELEGANT WEAPONS** is to perpetuate the rich legacy of the traditional proto-power metal invented by the heavy metal titans of the '70s and '80s, most pertinently **Richie's** own band, JUDAS PRIEST.

All four of us have got that original DNA in us, as does the new breed of traditional heavy metal fans. And so maybe a band like **ELEGANT WEAPONS**, hopefully we've got the credibility to make those original bands proud, because we were accepted by the members of those bands and by their fans. That's really the idea behind **ELEGANT WEAPONS** — to keep flying the flag for this style of timeless heavy metal."

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