

Ruby Waters is free in both mind and spirit with 'Almost Naked'

By **Murjani Rawls** - Nov 8, 2019



Photo Credit: Heather Cromartie

Have you ever listened to an album or an EP and there's that one song that catches you? That one song that completely identifies with your emotional state at the time as if it was almost written for you? "Almost Naked," the title track from 22-year-old singer/songwriter Ruby Waters' new EP, starts out with a simple acoustic guitar melody. She speaks of all the bombarding feelings and memories, both good and bad. When she gets towards the chorus, it levels out to a place of gratefulness and zen. A deep breath. If anything, the *Almost Naked* EP is more of a celebration of the roads she's traveled and miles she's collected memories on.

Music was always in Ruby's bloodline. Maybe there's a little predestination in this story. The singer grew up in Shelburne, Ontario as the youngest of four children. Her parents are musicians that met each other while they were in their own bands. To prove that everything is about timing, Ruby almost released an EP with the same name years ago, but decided to pull back on it. Now, we have an assortment of songs that channels a spirit that is reminiscent of the '60s and '70s soul and blues musicians. If there is anything that you can take from the *Almost Naked* EP and our conversation around it, is that Ruby Waters tells her story in her own unique way, a way that you won't forget.

You live in this cool band-house arrangement where there are a bunch of different musicians. Some of the EP was recorded there and *Almost Naked* gives this cozy, homey vibe. How is it living with a bunch of different musicians? Do you all bounce ideas off each other?

Yeah, I think the overall vibe of the house is good. It keeps everything raw and real. Everyone is pretty much down to earth and very supportive of each other. Everyone also plays very different music, so keeps it diverse and refreshing, for sure.

What is the arrangement set up like when you're recording? I know in "Honey," specifically, there's some saxophone. Some songs have a piano. Some have acoustics in there.

"Honey" was actually recorded not at home. I worked with a different producer on that one. All the rest of the songs were done at home. We did it all like in the basement. My producer and bandmate Sam has a sick set up downstairs. All different mics and just a laptop, really. Taking breaks to come up chill with the roommates. Have a beer, go back and relax. You're not like in some giant building with different rooms and all these people you don't know. Even though that's cool too. It's a really chill setup here.

The title of your EP is *Almost Naked*. Throughout all the songs, we really get a sense of your personality. There's a free-spirited essence like that flows through the course of the songs. There's this line that you say, "*sometimes life can really hit the spot.*" The "Supernatural" video shows you on tour and moments with your friends. I feel like that's what it's all about for you and this EP is really a reflection of letting us into your world. Whatever that may be.

I was going to put out an EP years ago called *Almost Naked*, but it wasn't the right time. It wasn't the right feeling. This time, I definitely feel grounded with my friends and family and I would be literally be nothing with them. *Almost Naked* is staying stripped, staying raw, staying true to yourself. With the almost part, it's like there's this aspect of you're never going to be fully naked. When you're diving into this industry, but you can be almost naked you know? Be as much as yourself as you can be while just playing the game. Also, not giving a fuck about the game and just doing it and just having fun.

Like you said in reference to "life really hits the spot," when you don't care about the stupid things. Little things are better when you just care about the people around you and what you're doing daily. It starts with a cup of coffee in the morning. Like getting out of bed. This EP is all about the little things and honing in on that. Then, bringing it into this one big vibe of goodness. I wouldn't have been able to write a single track without the influence of life and the people around me. I came from the country, too so I keep that element of nature. Just the vibe like nakedness in everything I do.

Going off the point about the music industry, do you feel any pressure considering a lot of emphasis today is placed on image? You have stated that one of your influences is Janis Joplin. I get that vibe from you. That '60s Woodstock spirit of just getting lost in the art that you're making. She had a powerful voice that you can differentiate and I see that a lot in you.

Janis is a huge influence. Everybody in the '60s just kind of did what they wanted, so definitely trying to play off that. I think that there's obviously pressure with any industry. If you want to be an electrician, well, there's pressure there too. Every industry has pressure. I think just doing what you do best and just going for it is the most important part of diving in. With the music industry, there's a lot of people that think you have to put on this image. You don't. You just have to do what you do and avoid the pressure. Keep moving in and then see where it goes.

It's working and I'm happy about it. I'm just going to continue to do my thing and not worry too much about what anybody thinks, essentially. Do what you want to do. That's the most important part. If you write something that you don't believe in, then you're going to sing it 1000 times and it's going to catch up to you. You'll realize eventually that you don't want to sing it, you know? Yeah, just being real and staying true. I do think there was a lot less pressure back in the day to put on this front. So, I think tapping into that and like getting inspiration from those people is a big part of who I am. I love everyone who played Woodstock. I swear to God, I was there in a past life.

In "Last Cigarette," you add this arrangement where you're howling at the moon. A yearning or craving for something.

Yeah, definitely. Hunger, tiredness, everything comes down to handling it. I do have my fair share of vices, so cigarettes are definitely one of my main ones. "Last Cigarette" is about that hunger and feeding it. Running out of shit to feed it with. You're on your last smoke. You need to buy another pack. You gotta feed that inner hunger.

It's also wanting to take a break from life altogether. It happens, you know? Everyone has to take a break. Not even from like little things like work, but all of life. It just happens sometimes.

"Here's To You," is a break-up song that I feel like this is going to be played in a lot of friend circles. You go to your neighborhood bar and toast with your friends. Are you being happy that somebody left finally, and he's getting the freedom of like, having this independence beer you're leaving from a bad relationship?

I remember that my producer, Sam was going through a breakup. I had to like hone into my old breakups. It's easier to go through a breakup with someone that's your homie than alone. When you're alone, sometimes songs get a little sappy going through a breakup. With someone, it's like, "I don't fucking need them! Let's go out. Let's have a good time, be happy." Obviously, breakups come with sadness and happiness, but happiness is important. That song is just about that happy moment of moving on finally and just being able to have fun being free.

You like to do a lot of acoustic, stripped-down sets. With this EP there's a lot of instrumentation, but it doesn't overpower your voice which is the most powerful tool of all. You're able to use it in

different ranges and cadences throughout these songs. Have you ever thought about doing an acoustic EP down the road?

Every show I do, I'm always going to have a track where it's just me and my guitar because that's kind of where it all started. Sometimes, we'll start to build around a song with a beat. Then, I sit on it and then we kind of go around that voice. Being able to work with different producers and try different genres is cool because you find your voice in that respect. If you have a staple, then you can do anything and you can sing any genre, but still make it your own.

To round everything up, I wanted to talk about songs like "Supernatural" and "Honey." I like the cadence that you use at the beginning of "Supernatural" as well. There's an essence of love and freedom with both songs. Love doesn't have to be defined. It can be void of gender or title, just give it freely.

It's definitely free love. Love all genders. Everyone should make love with everyone.

"Supernatural" is the build-up to the moment where you get to express that love.

At first is like, 'I don't know how this is going to play out.' Just kind of vibing.

In the chorus, when that hits it's supposed to be that feeling of "oh, finally. There it is." The whole EP is not supposed to be reaching out to any type of person. It's supposed to reach out to everyone. Love can be just some things for some people. Some people love everything, so definitely tapping into that.

Murjani Rawls

<http://mjrawls.com>

Journalist, Self-published author of five books, podcast host of The War Report and The Final Cut, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls has been stretching his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed over 200+ artists spanning many genres, written over 700 articles ranging displaying his passionate aspirations to keep evolving as his years in media continue.



