

THE ROCKET SUMMER'S
NEW REFLECTION

MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK'S
NEW DIRECTION

ALKALINE TRIO'S
NEW ADDICTION

ALTPRESS

#260
MARCH 2010

25
YEARS



"WHEN YOU'RE TAKING PUNCHES
ALL THE TIME, YOU THINK EVERYONE'S
GONNA SWING AT YOU."

30 SECONDS TO MARS

FIGHT TO THE TOP

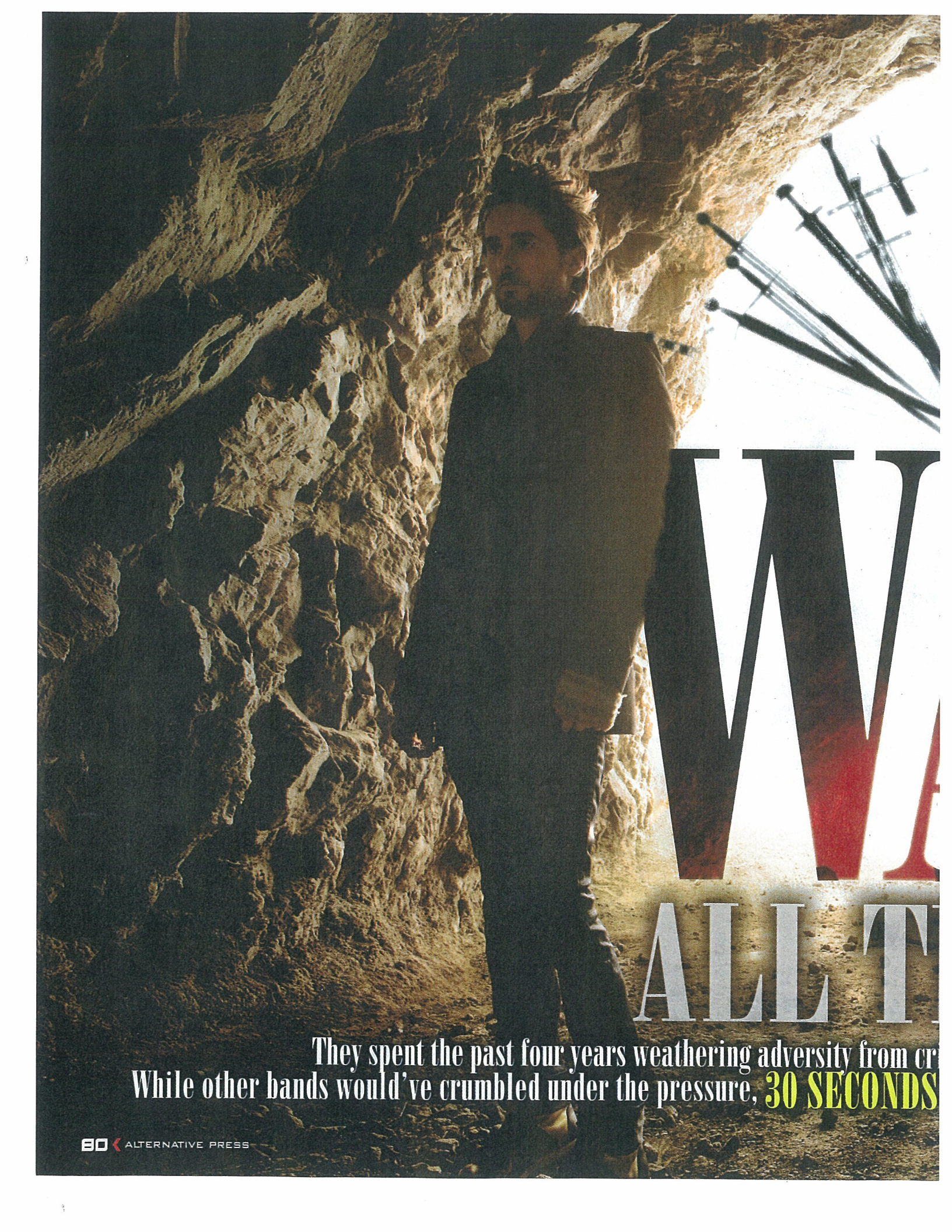
THE
ORAL HISTORY
OF **NEW FOUND
GLORY**

ALTPRESS.COM

USA \$4.99 / DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH

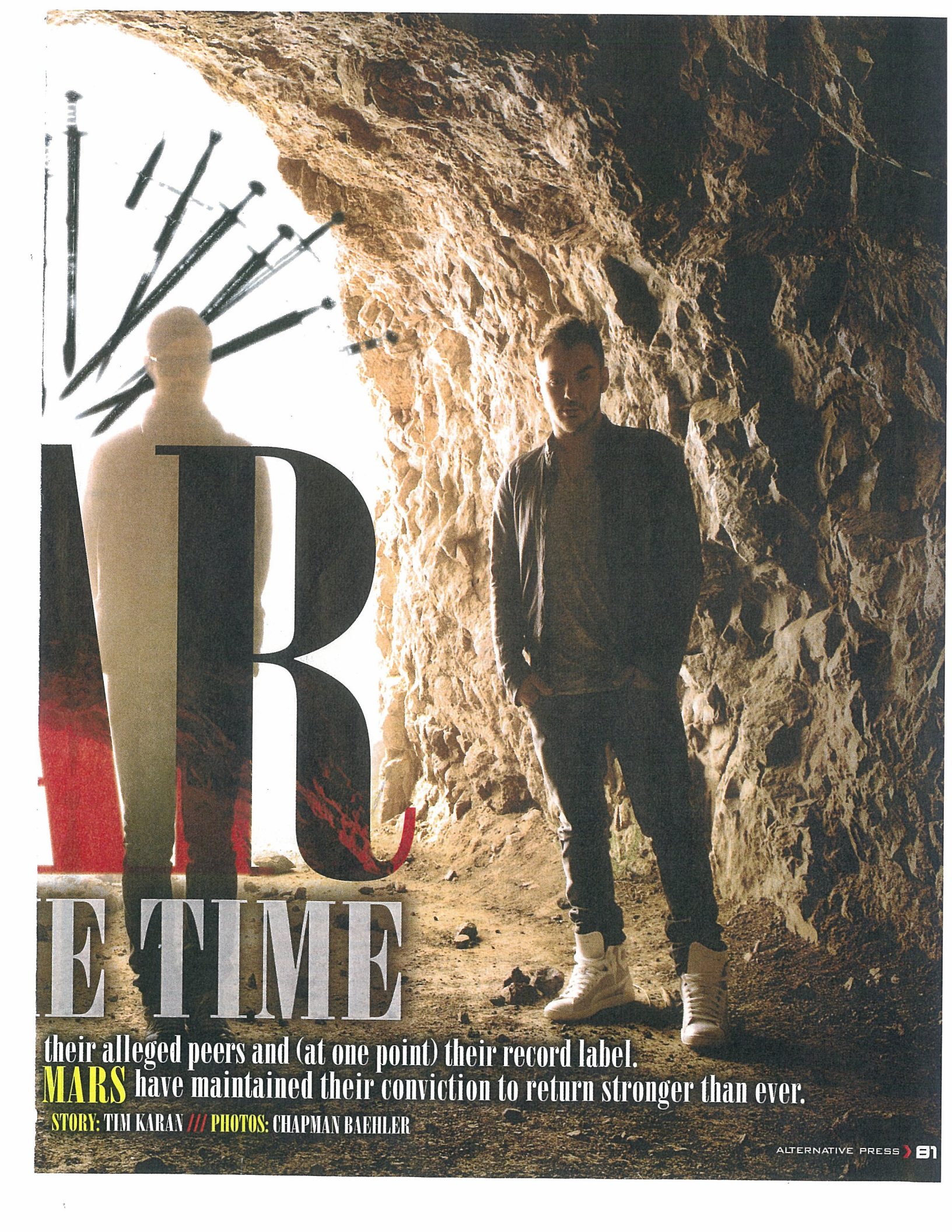


+ **MARK HOPPUS** | THEREFORE I AM | **THE ALL-AMERICAN REJECTS** | **ALEXANDRA DADDARIO**



WV ALL T

They spent the past four years weathering adversity from cr
While other bands would've crumbled under the pressure, **30 SECONDS**



MARS E TIME

their alleged peers and (at one point) their record label.
MARS have maintained their conviction to return stronger than ever.

STORY: TIM KARAN /// PHOTOS: CHAPMAN BAEHLER



IT'S been 11 seconds and Jared Leto still hasn't answered.

That's a long time to sit in complete silence after an interview question has been asked. Sprawled out in the back lounge of his band's modest tour bus, the 30 Seconds To Mars frontman is currently pondering how to respond to this: "After the agony you went through making *This Is War*, how does it feel to finally have it released?"

Fourteen seconds.

Leto brushes the back of his fingerless-gloved hand against the thin, dark beard that's sparsely covering his chiseled jaw. It's the first sign of movement since the question was posed.

Seventeen seconds.

The singer, dressed in a long, black pea coat layered atop a black-and-white plaid flannel shirt and gray, distressed skinny jeans, stirs. Without removing his gaze from the nothing he's been staring at, he finally begins to answer. "It was a tumultuous time," he says slowly, followed by another lengthy pause. Although he chooses his words with tedious deliberation, it's almost as if the search for a suitable response causes him to go back and re-experience the events in question all over again.

"I suppose it takes a moment or two to let go and embrace this sense of peace and accomplishment that one feels after being part of such intense conflict. But it feels great. It feels very good." Leto seems content with this answer and shifts in his seat, physically bracing for another question.

Contrary to any public perception, nothing about 30 Seconds To Mars has ever come easily. Formed during the mid '90s by Jared (vocals/guitar/keyboards) and his older brother Shannon Leto (drums), and featuring guitarist Tomo Miličević for the past seven years, :30TM were thrust into the spotlight in 2006 when their video for "The Kill" surfaced, turning the band and their sophomore album, *A Beautiful Lie*, into modern-rock mainstays. Still, that was almost four years ago—longer than the entire *lifespan* of most bands—and in the time since, :30TM have seen conflicts with critics and a lawsuit with their own label, Virgin Records, push them to the brink of bankruptcy and their personal breaking points.

Parked outside of the sold-out Fillmore Theater in frigid Detroit, the :30TM tour bus—one of two shared between the band and its crew of nearly 20 during their pre-holiday promotional tour—is immaculate and comfortable, but far less luxurious than those of some bands frequenting Warped Tour lineups. During some tours, the back lounge is turned into a makeshift studio for Leto to edit the band's videos (he directs them under pseudonyms like "Bartholomew Cubbins") or work on new songs. For this run of shows, Leto is able to use the private lounge for its actual purpose: privacy. But even *that* isn't entirely true. For the past several months—and most of the interim between the band's second and third albums—Leto has been hooked up to a wireless microphone, capturing everything he says (even behind the closed lounge door) for a documentary the band intend to release later this year. If it seems like he's constantly at work, there's a reason for that.

"I do have moments where I relax and take time for myself," he says. "But I'm just really compelled to do all of this. It's a wonderful thing to do with your life. It runs very deep for [me and my brother]. It's our blood and our bones."

Constantly emanating charisma, Jared, the younger Leto (he turned 38 a week after this interview) often looks into the distance when speaking. But when he fixes his eyes upon you, you're awash in the feeling he's instantaneously figured you out (and, according to guitarist Miličević, he probably *has*).

This much is known for sure about the early years of Jared and Shannon Leto: Shannon was born March 9, 1970, in Bossier City, a casino boomtown in northern Louisiana. Jared was born the day after Christmas the following year. Raised by their single mother, the trio moved constantly throughout the brothers' childhood and adolescence—as far north as New York City and as far south as Haiti. "We climbed out of the muddy banks of the Mississippi," says Jared, adopting an exaggerated Southern accent. "Two white-trash kids and a mother determined to transcend what she had been given to find opportunity."

As he describes his youth, he's even more cautious with his words—almost cryptic—making it impossible to discern whether he's romanticizing a difficult period in his life or merely allowing himself a moment to reminisce. "We grew up poor—food-stamp poor. We had a vagabond upbringing with a very young mother. But we traveled a bit of the world. A peripatetic existence was something that was normal [to us]. As a kid, you don't know what *abnormal* is. I've been to four schools in four years? That's normal."

One constant for the brothers as they struggled to maintain focus in school was the art that surrounded them. "We lived on communes and in art colonies," says Jared, who admits that as a child, he was more fixated with visual arts like painting and sculpting than he was with music. But it was music that would hold the brothers together. Shannon began drumming at age 7, and Jared remembers someone teaching him to play Mozart's "Air" on a secondhand piano. "Music was always the backdrop," says Jared. "There would always come along some bearded hippie who would teach me a guitar chord. Someone also gave us a big crate of classic-rock albums. That was when my brother [and] I discovered Led Zeppelin, and that changed everything." Although the pair never played in bands growing up (Jared recalls being in a Depeche Mode-esque group "for a heartbeat"), they continued to teach themselves how to play, with Jared learning guitar, bass and keyboards while Shannon concentrated on drums.

"With instruments, I really don't want to know too much about anything," says Jared. "I don't want to know the names of things, the structure or scales. I like to

keep things less cerebral because the intellect always wants to solve a problem. With what we do, I like to have freedom—almost how a child would approach an instrument."

Both Jared and Shannon dropped out of high school, but Jared eventually re-enrolled and graduated from prep school in 1989. He then studied to be a painter at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and transferred to New York City's School of Visual Arts to concentrate on filmmaking. But it wasn't long before he decided to go west, moving to Los Angeles in 1992 to focus on becoming a musician. To make ends meet, he took the occasional acting role, which led to his breakthrough two years later as high school slacker/emo antihero Jordan Catalano on the short-lived but critically acclaimed ABC series, *My So-Called Life*. Although the Leto brothers had gone their own ways to focus on their own lives, Shannon soon joined Jared in L.A. and the brothers reassembled in a one-bedroom apartment.

"We had always been coming apart and together and doing different things in life," says Jared. "But [what would be] 30 Seconds To Mars kept coming back. Our apartment was basically filled with musical equipment—drums and guitar amps taking up the bedroom with one person on the couch and the other on a futon. We started playing music more and more, but with no real endgame, no plan except to have the experience of playing." Although *My So-Called Life* was canceled in 1995, Leto spent the next several years acting in movies like *How To Make An American Quilt* and *Prefontaine* while :30TM grew from a familial project into something more. "You start off with 14-minute art-rock songs," says Jared. "You experiment and then you have this awareness: I can actually do this. I can actually put these elements together. Then you go out and try to convince someone to let you play their seedy little bar for 10 people who are there for cheap drinks. Then you play and something wonderful happens."

The day after 30 Seconds To Mars nearly level the packed Fillmore in Detroit, they're at the House Of Blues in Cleveland for what will be their final show of the decade. Three hours before show time, Shannon Leto is nestled in the far corner of the venue's restaurant, obscured by large sunglasses and a navy blue hoodie pulled over his head. "From all of our touring, my brother and I know the House Of Blues menu front-to-back," he says. "I don't even have to look at it. But I will just to be sure there's nothing different." Once satisfied that everything is where it should be, he settles on the teriyaki salmon and catfish nuggets.

Almost two years older than Jared but smaller in stature, he's the exact opposite of his brother in many ways. Instead of being pensive and deliberate with his words, Shannon is much more frenetic, speaking quickly and candidly on most topics—except for what exactly became of him after dropping out of high school through the time he was 23. "It was a really dark time," he says. "Over the years, I worked a lot of odd jobs—I sold Christmas trees, did construction and worked at a pizza place. I was just digging it out trying to make an honest living."

Aside from playing drums for one season as a teenager at a community center jazz workshop, he'd never really played with anyone other than his brother, and drumming was one of the things that fell to the wayside during his "dark" years. After moving to join Jared in Los Angeles—and even acting in a few projects Jared was involved with (including two episodes of *My So-Called Life*), he returned to the drums in 1995. "My brother and I decided to record a CD," he says. "It was a natural thing. We'd always played, and since we were living together, it was just kind of a release. But we started to want to share what we were creating with others." This was the official genesis of 30 Seconds To Mars, although that name wouldn't come along right away. "We played out under different names because of Jared being who he was," says Shannon. "We wanted to let the music speak for itself."

Back on the bus, Jared Leto is deliberating when would be the best time to present his crew with their Christmas presents—Flip video camcorders. "Now or after the show?"

His assistant, Emma, fills him in on the rest of the night's timeline, and he decides to hold off for the moment. While it's true that most musicians don't travel with a personal assistant in tow, it's more a reflection on just how overwhelmingly busy Leto is at any point in time than any "movie star" stereotype. In fact, while message-board haters might claim the band garner attention solely due to their frontman's fame, Leto's day job (or *night* job, depending on how you look at it) has been more hindrance than help.

"When we were trying to get signed, nobody wanted to have anything to do with us for a year-and-a-half because I had made a couple of films," he says. "People ran the other way a good couple hundred miles. But then they heard the music and became interested."

Immortal Records, the Los Angeles label responsible for discovering Korn and Incubus, signed the Leto brothers in 1998, and with the help of producers Bob Ezrin (Pink Floyd, KISS) and Brian Virtue (Jane's Addiction, theSTART), :30TM began work on what would become their self-titled debut. "The first record—which we originally called *Welcome To The Universe*—was really about creating a world," says Jared. "Every guitar tone, every pedal, every EQ; everything was something to be explored, and we wanted it to sound like nothing that had been recorded before."

By this time, the Letos had enlisted guitarist Solon Bixler and bassist Matt Wachter. "It was a nonstop environment of writing, recording, rehearsing and touring," says Bixler, now vocalist/guitarist for Great Northern, in an e-mail to AP. "[Jared and Shannon] are artists and good people. I immediately felt a strong bond with them. They invited me into their home and creative space and allowed me the freedom to let something I was born with flourish." However, the bulk of the writing and recording was done by the perfectionist Jared, leading to the record



L-R: MILIČEVIĆ, J. LETO, S. LETO

not seeing release until 2002. In the interim, Jared achieved new levels of success as an actor with roles in *Fight Club*, *American Psycho* and *Requiem For A Dream*, as *Immortal* was bought out by Virgin Records, leading to their debut being released on a major label. Although the album received mixed reviews—many preoccupied with Jared's acting career—it was life changing for the members of the band. "It wasn't like it was some huge success story," says Jared. "But it was for us. We put out a record."

Around this time, somewhere in Troy, Michigan, a guitarist in his early 20s named Tomo Miličević was about to give up on his dream. Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Miličević's Croatian parents moved his family (including his older sister and younger brother) to the U.S. when he was in the third grade to avoid the Bosnian War. His father (an agricultural engineer in Croatia) accepted work at a meatpacking plant and his mother (a psychiatrist) took a job putting handles on car doors at Chrysler.

"I have all these vague memories of being on the beach in Croatia when I was a kid, running naked with my cousins," he says, seated in the lounge of the bus two hours before the show, his long dark hair pulled back except for a few strands that hang over his eyes. "But I consider myself an American. I was raised here. My values are from here." Although Miličević, 30, gained his U.S. citizenship when he was about 14, he still speaks fluent Croatian. "My parents made a big deal about not forgetting where we're from," he says. "When people come from Croatia to see [30TM] in Europe and they speak the language, I'm like, 'These are my fuckin' people.'"

Confident, bordering on cocky, Miličević knows he's talented, and he makes no apologies for it. "Bred to be a concert violinist" in his own words from the time he was 3, he listened only to classical music during his childhood. "I had been a total loser and a nerd," he says. "People made fun of me constantly, but I was oblivious to it. I was only thinking about violin." But after friends introduced him to metal—especially Metallica—when he was 11, "the switch was flipped." His parents

supported his decision to start playing guitar, and he and his father spent an entire summer and \$5,000 building his first—a Fender Telecaster body with a Stratocaster neck with a wood combination of a classic Les Paul mahogany body and a book-matched maple top.

He began playing in bands around Troy, joining every outfit that would have him. One of his bands, Morphic, played a showcase in Los Angeles, landing manager Arthur Spivak—the same man who managed 30TM. "That's when I started listening to 30 Seconds To Mars," says Miličević. "There was something cool about the music that I'd never heard before. Something clicked. In my head, I was like, 'Man, if only I could be the guitarist in that band.'" About a year later, disillusioned with the prospects of making it with Morphic, Miličević quit the band and fell into a deep depression.

"By this time, I was [in my mid-twenties] and thinking I had already missed my window. Because, like it or not, there is a window of time when you can make it into the club. I decided to make an eBay account and sell all of my gear—including the guitar I had made with my father. It was the only way I could let the dream go." But instead of listing his instruments for sale, his girlfriend (who is still with him) told him to sleep on it. "The next day, I got a call from [Spivak] saying that Solon [Bixler] had quit 30 Seconds To Mars and that I should come to L.A. to audition. Man, it's weird how things work out."

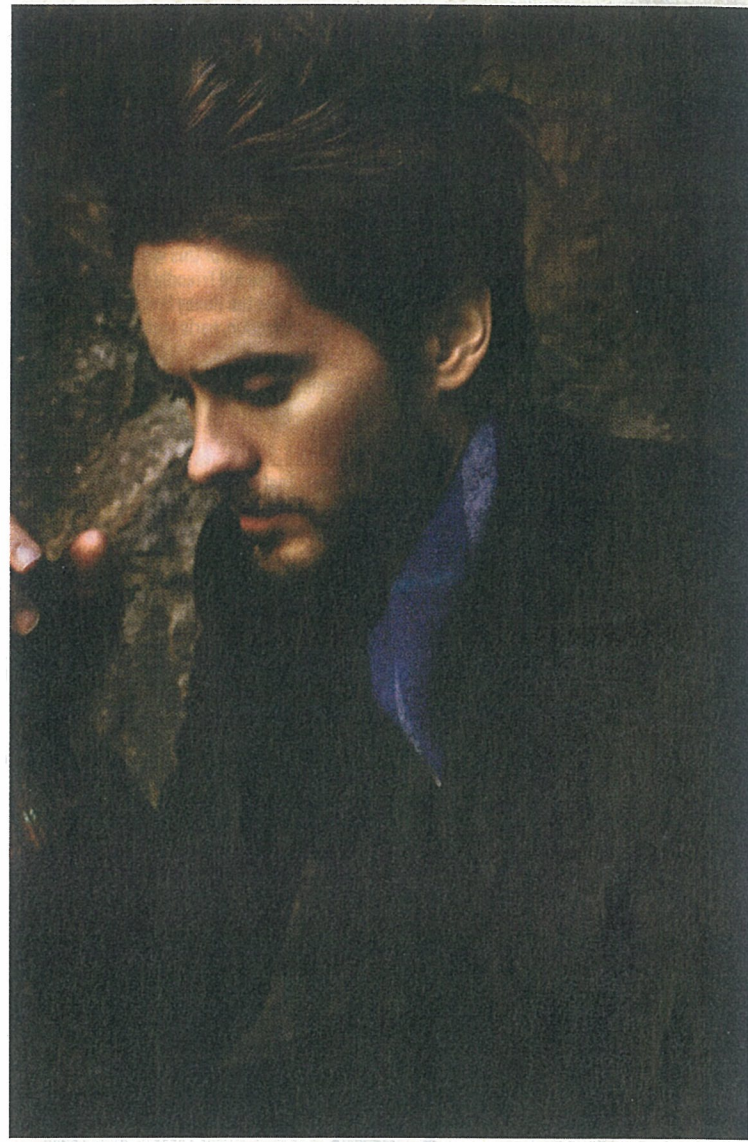
Miličević bought a one-way ticket to L.A., replaced Bixler (who says he "just needed a break" and wanted to concentrate on starting his own band) and the four-piece got to work on their sophomore release, *A Beautiful Lie*. "We knew there was an opportunity there to redefine and say something new," says Jared, again seated in the tour bus' back lounge, just before lifting his head from his BlackBerry—a position he is often in. "We always wanted to reserve the right to do whatever the fuck we wanted to do. For us, it was important to take a different route with the second album. When we were making it, there were some early champions of it, but I don't remember anybody jumping up and down saying, 'Oh, my God, you guys did something amazing here.'"

A Beautiful Lie was released in August 2005 but did little to secure the band's future. In fact, they were about to be dropped by Virgin; a changing of the guard was going on within the company and newly appointed chairman and CEO, Jason Flom, had *A Beautiful Lie* at the top of his stack of CDs from bands to let go. "Their first record had done relatively nothing, and the second was at a crawl," says Flom, who is now president of Universal Republic imprint Lava Records. "A lot of people were saying that 30 Seconds To Mars were a vanity project because Jared is an actor. It really just didn't look good on any level."

That was, however, before he went to see them open for Audioslave at Madison Square Garden in late 2005. "They put on a full-on rock spectacular. It was amazing. After the show, I had dinner with Jared, and he told me that he had just turned down [a role in] a Clint Eastwood movie because the band were more important to him. I'd never heard anything like that. Obviously, this was the opposite of a vanity project. I basically went into Virgin and stood on the table and said, 'This is the beginning of the band's new life.'"

It wasn't until their video for "The Kill"—conceived and directed by Jared—hit MTV during the spring of 2006, followed by a staggering increase in plays on modern-rock radio, that 30 Seconds To Mars slowly shifted in the press and public away from being "the band of actor Jared Leto" toward being a legitimate entity.





But that didn't mean the issue was dead: The band signed on alongside the Used to co-headline the 2007 Rockstar Taste Of Chaos tour, which should have been indisputable evidence of the band's credibility. But rumors and reported disputes with other bands on the tour plagued :30TM throughout the entire run, culminating in the tour's early March date in El Paso, Texas. According to some, Leto jumped into the crowd and was overpowered by fans, resulting in a broken nose, a foot injury and other ailments. According to others, he was punched in the face. The most damning interpretation claimed that he attempted to stage dive and the crowd parted to let him fall on his face. In addition, rumors began swirling that bassist Wachter quit the band on the same night.

Leto stiffens at the mere mention of El Paso. "It never happened," he says. "Isn't the internet amazing? It was a total tabloid fake story. The night Matt [Wachter] told us that he was quitting was a month before. He had a kid, got married and wanted to be home. It was amicable. It was the best way you'd want something like that to happen. [Wachter declined to comment for this story.—ed.] It's a dramatic story [to truncate it into the same night as the incident in El Paso], but it's not my story. And then there was the story that I jumped into the crowd and nobody caught me. If you saw how many people were at that El Paso show, you could've been a 560-pound transvestite from Tijuana named Jorge and they would've caught you."

On that tour, Saosin vocalist Cove Reber—who joined :30TM onstage many nights to sing "Battle Of One"—had his preconceptions about the band blown away. "We assumed [Leto] was this actor-turned-musician trying to make a buck off his name," says Reber in a separate interview. After Reber was quoted in the press saying something along those lines, the band had a sit-down with Saosin mid-tour. "[Jared] just called us in and asked what the deal was, and I said I meant nothing by it," says Reber. "I wasn't aware that I had crossed any line, and for the rest of the tour, he kind of took me under his wing. Yeah, they don't run around partying, and that makes them sort of stick out among other bands. But we realized by the end of [TOC] that those guys were a lot more like us than the other bands on the tour. But sometimes being different unintentionally leads you into conflict."

Perhaps this underlying theme is the real dawn of *This Is War*. During the end of the album cycle for *A Beautiful Lie*, :30TM adopted a defensive stance that bled into gossip that the band were difficult to work with or worse, under the rule of a spoiled Hollywood dictator. But Leto says the reason for this negativity is simple. "If you talk to anybody—from Bono to Bill Clinton—it's common that when you have some success, it's also the time you're heavily criticized," the frontman says. "We had worked so hard for so long for so many years and had been beaten up for obvious reasons. But when you're taking punches all the time, you think *everyone's* gonna swing at you. When you're in a defensive posture sometimes, that can be not such a healthy place."

Although he seems to have put the past behind him with this matter, there's another jab at the band that brings Leto out of his philosophical, deliberate aura. Last summer, Death Cab For Cutie frontman Ben Gibbard was quoted in an issue of *The Big Takeover* saying, "[Leto] is a professional actor in music; so there's no way to feel any sincerity about his position as a musician. He makes a living playing characters—so why wouldn't he be able to take a step forward? Then you're also acting what you think a rock star should act like."

Leto has heard the quote—and many like it—before. When confronted with it, he at first adopts a passive stance. "I'm not sure why anybody would spend their time sitting around thinking about me," he says. "When people come out and insult like this, they're not insulting me, they're insulting everyone who knows 30 Seconds To Mars, anyone who's experienced it. I think we could all deal with a little less insulting of one another and a little more support."

But after a change of subject, he returns to the topic, slightly more agitated. "We haven't gotten it easy. It's not like someone's given us the key to the kingdom. We went out just like anybody else and worked for it: town-to-town, person-to-person, song-by-song. I don't apologize for making some films. [Are you] fucking kidding me? The fact that I get to make some fuckin' movies in my life? Where I came from? Dirt fuckin' poor? Food stamps? You're gonna hold that against me? Guess what? Fuck you. I got lucky. My God, I'd go do it again in two seconds fuckin' flat."

...BUT WHAT I'D REALLY LIKE TO DO IS ACT

Think Jared Leto is the only Hollywood denizen with a music career? Read on.

ADAM BRODY AND BRETT HARRISON

The D.C. alumni Adam Brody and Brett Harrison (he was in two episodes before starring in the defunct CW series, *The Reaper*) make up half of L.A. indie outfit Big In Japan. Brody drums and Harrison plays guitar for the band, who released their debut, *Music For Dummies*, in 2005 through Nightshift Records. Since the band only play sporadically, the limited copies of their CD have become difficult-to-find collector's items.

DOWNLOAD: Big In Japan's "All The Fish In The Sea"

ZOOEY DESCHANEL

You've heard Zoey Deschanel stretch her velvety pipes in *Elf* and her piano composition, "Bittersuite," was featured in her film, *Winter Passing*, but that's only brushing the surface of her musical career. Deschanel and fellow actress Samantha Shelton play in the cabaret act If All The Stars Were Pretty Babies, and Deschanel is set to release her second full-length with She & Him, her collaboration with singer/songwriter M. Ward, on March 23.

DOWNLOAD: She & Him's "Why Do You Let Me Stay Here"

RYAN GOSLING AND ZACH SHIELDS

Back in 2005, future Oscar nominee Ryan Gosling was dating his *The Notebook* co-star Rachel McAdams and the starlet's sister was dating Zach Shields. Gosling and Shields bonded and created Dead Man's Bones, an Arcade Fire-esque theater production ensemble featuring a children's choir from the Silverlake Conservatory of Music. The video for their song "Name In Stone" lit up YouTube last year, and their self-titled debut dropped in October on Anti-.

DOWNLOAD: Dead Man's Bones' "Name In Stone"

ADRIAN GRENIER

When he isn't hugging anything out, *Entourage* star Adrian Grenier is a member of two Brooklyn-based indie bands: He's the frontman of Kid Friendly and the drummer of the Honey Brothers. While as of this writing nobody had logged into the Kid Friendly MySpace page in almost a year, the Honey Brothers released the EP, *Demonstration*, early last summer.

DOWNLOAD: The Honey Brothers' "Demonstration"

SCARLETT JOHANSSON

In 2008, *Lost In Translation* ingenue Scarlett Johansson released an album of Tom Waits covers, produced by Dave Sitek of TV On The Radio and featuring guest vocals by David

Bowie. In 2009, she collaborated with singer/songwriter Pete Yorn for the album *Break Up*, which dropped this past September. Although the album received mixed reviews, it reached No. 41 on the *Billboard* 200.

DOWNLOAD: "Relator" from *Break Up*

JULIETTE LEWIS

H2O guitarist Todd Morse and Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl are among the musicians who played with Juliette & The Licks, the outfit fronted by actress Juliette Lewis. After two full-lengths and modest success with the title track from 2005's *You're Speaking My Language*, the band called it quits last year. Later in 2009, Lewis returned with a new band called the New Romantics and released *Terra Incognita*, produced by Omar Rodriguez-Lopez of the Mars Volta.

DOWNLOAD: "Terra Incognita"

JASON SCHWARTZMAN

Before charming everyone and their indie cousin with his role as scheming private-school playwright Max Fischer in *Rushmore*, Schwartzman was a founding member and drummer for Phantom Planet. In 2003, he left the band to concentrate on acting, but four years later, he resurfaced with the solo project Coconut Records, releasing *Nighttiming* in 2007 and *Davy* in 2009 on his own label, Young Baby Records.

DOWNLOAD: Coconut Records' "West Coast"

Miličević shakes off any allusions that Leto is a pampered movie star method-acting the role of a rock star. "There's nothing fake about Jared," he says. "I've seen him in the studio and you can't act that. By the way, when all musicians are onstage, they're playing their parts." He also finds it laughable that anyone thinks anyone in the band is rich. "It's not like because Jared Leto is the singer of the band that we're all flying first-class, eating sushi and staying in five-star hotels," says Miličević. "We don't stay in hotels. We sleep on the bus—Jared included. I have friends who are like, 'Dude, you're in fuckin' 30 Seconds To Mars. You gotta have money now.' But that's not the case. Me and Shannon are the same, and yeah, Jared is doing okay, but it's not like he lives in some mansion. We play these big shows, and I go home to my 200-square-foot studio apartment that I share with my girlfriend and brother and eat ramen noodles."

However, the band didn't gain any points in the realm of public perception of their finances when Virgin sued them in August 2008 for alleged breach of contract—the most visible battle during a period the band commonly refer to as "war." Although many details are hazy and shrouded in legal bureaucracy, the story is this: 30 Seconds To Mars were still under their original Immortal contract but were looking to exercise their right to break away after what they considered to be unjust treatment by Virgin. The label said the band still owed them three more albums and sued for the dramatic and (not-so) arbitrary sum of \$30 million. In the end, :30TM settled with the label, and everyone in the band says relations with Virgin are fine. Still, Leto wouldn't trade the experience for any sum of cash. "It helped make [*This Is War*] stronger," he says. This is a record about survival.

It's that combative approach that runs deep throughout *This Is War*, an album born of conflict. While it's unlikely that many listeners will ever personally face a multi-million dollar lawsuit, Shannon says the battle cries on the disc are relevant to everyone's life. "It could be a war with yourself, your neighbor, structure, society—there's always a war going on," he says. "When you're treated unfairly, you go to war."

"It's interesting what you're capable of if you're backed into a corner," adds Jared. "There've been phenomenal books written and paintings painted during times of duress and struggle. As we were recording, I said all the time, 'Today's curse is tomorrow's blessing.'"

For 30 Seconds To Mars, *This Is War* signifies more than just a new album. "It's a new beginning, a new start," says Jared. The band will hit the road hard, kicking off with their first "real" arena tour of Europe followed by festivals in the U.S. and runs in Japan, Australia and South America. He says the intense schedule ahead for :30TM won't affect his film career because after his latest role as the title character in the upcoming time-jumping art film, *Mr. Nobody*, Leto would've taken a break anyway. "I wouldn't be working much as an actor either way," he says. "The roles I do tend to be pretty challenging and take a lot out of me, and I'm pretty specific about what I want to do as an actor. So I'm patient."

While it might be easy to consider Leto and :30TM unquestionably successful, Jared says they've taken something valuable from all of their battles—an appreciation for failure. "We all fall short," he says. "We all fail. I fail more than anyone I know. It's the ultimate educator, and it's funny that we go to such lengths to avoid it. Our failures are what have gotten this band to where we are right now—which is an amazing place."

Now only seconds from their final show of a tumultuous decade, Jared Leto is surrounded backstage by friends from past tours—including local DJs and crew—and fans reveling in his proximity as his brother and Miličević stretch and embrace the growing roar on the other side of the curtain.

"I understand perception and stereotypes and why some of them have been put in place," he says. "But we've changed a lot of perceptions out there. We've earned respect in a lot of people's minds and we don't mind earning it a little more. I don't mind the work. We're here. We're not going anywhere." **ALT**

WHAT DOES JARED LETO LISTEN TO? WHAT BIG PLANS DO :30TM HAVE FOR THE SUMMIT? (AND WHAT EXACTLY IS THE SUMMIT?) WE'VE GOT ANSWERS EXCLUSIVELY AT ALTPRESS.COM/FEATURES.

