



HAMELL ON TRIAL *TACKLE BOX*

Hamell on Trial is the musical alias of New York-based folk punk hero Ed Hamell. A one-man explosion, he is loud-as-war one minute, stepping off the microphone to whisper to an enthralled audience the next. This is a dynamic performance informed by politics, passion, intelligence and the all-important sense of humor. His caustic wit and devil-may-care attitude has long been a favorite of anti-establishment icons Aesop Rock, Kimya Dawson, Ani DiFranco and the critical elite inciting *Rolling Stone* magazine to call him "Bald, bold and superbad!" Henry Rollins says "Hamell is a one man rock show!" He has been described as "Bill Hicks, Hunter S. Thompson, and Joe Strummer all rolled into one" by Philadelphia Weekly and a "one man Tarantino flick: loud, vicious, luridly hilarious, gleefully and deeply offensive" by the Village Voice.

His tenth album, *Tackle Box*, is his second for New West Records and features all instruments and sounds played by Hamell himself, with the exception of one. Hamell states, "The first voice you hear on the album is Donald Trump. It's from a campaign rally where he was saying he'd like to punch a protester in the face. His supporters cheer. I thought I'd kickstart the album making people aware that, should they disagree with that attitude, should they find his actions deplorable, his lies, his vanity, his lack of grace and intellect, his pandering to the lowest common denominator, his inciting violence towards minorities and the disenfranchised, they could find safety here at a Hamell show, from a Hamell song. Let us remember that he did not win the popular vote, his supporters are in the minority and I will treat them with all the respect *THEY* show minorities. The first voice you hear on the album is Donald Trump. *ALL* other voices you hear on the album, in firm and resolute opposition, are mine."

Tackle Box was co-produced by the Grammy award winning producer Phil "The Butcher" Nicolo (Bob Dylan, Ms. Lauryn Hill) and features the controversial song "Not Aretha's Respect (COPS),' an autobiographical tale teaching his child how to not get shot by a police officer. "COPS' is a song about parenting. My son is 15, I'm teaching him how to drive. I'm explaining, because he has the ability at home to explain his side of the story to me, that he might not have that chance when he's in a situation with a police officer. Say 'Yes sir, no sir' and come home safe to me. The boss ain't always right, but he's always the boss. All four incidents in the song actually happened. I play all kinds of gigs, house concerts, theaters, diy punk rock rooms and the kids love this song. It's even has a chorus they can sing along to and rally behind. Last year I was touring across the country with my son and the day after we played Dallas, some cops got shot. I wish no violence on anyone. I preface my introduction to this song live now by saying I just wish the good cops would call out the bad cops. This "Code of Blue" thing is helping no one. And if we don't think it's a race thing, well..."

Once again we see Hamell uncompromising, fearless, obscene, insightful, absurd, angry & poignant and, in a first-time-ever ploy, including four children's songs...for balance. Hamell says, "I threw the four 'FROGGY' songs in there, trying my hand at children's songs if you will, to

maybe make sense of what the American Dream is or maybe was. In the four songs, interspersed throughout the album, we see the character Froggy as a child, courting, running a business with his wife, and finally surrounded by his grandchildren. This is how he interprets success. I think in light of all the volatility in the country, I needed to remind myself of happier times or potential. And of course the listener, after so many confrontational topics, needs a little refuge.”

Hamell tours the world constantly, seemingly enjoying every performance challenge. From larger stages and theaters, winning the coveted Herald Angel Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, to house concerts and DIY underground spaces, this is a man who clearly loves to play. Armed with a battered 1937 Gibson acoustic guitar that he amplifies mightily and strums like a machine gun, a politically astute mind that can't stop moving, and a mouth that can be profane one minute and profound the next, with *Tackle Box*, Hamell sets his sights on the new America and issues personal and spiritual. His performances invoke thoughts of the great, rebellious satirists and social commentators of the past: Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor and Bill Hicks. Hamell is a great mind with acoustic punk rock mixed with a seeker's soul. There's no way around his obscurity but in that is a willingness to fight for the free thinkers of the world. Don't we need that now more than ever?