

**PATTERSON HOOD**  
***MURDERING OSCAR (and other love songs)***

Release date: June 23, 2009

I moved to Athens, GA on Aprils Fools Day, 1994. Perhaps I thought I was kidding myself, just stopping in on my way to the bigger city an hour to the Southwest. I moved into a little house on Ruth St. with my new friend, Brandon. We had panhandlers in our driveway and had a crack head that frequently banged on our door at four thirty in the morning. I had a shitty job and only knew two other people in town. I was alive with the fresh opportunities posed by moving to a town with an actual music scene and clubs to conquer. I wrote an album's worth of songs and called it *Murdering Oscar (and other love songs)*.

Unfortunately, I didn't have any money for studio time, much less financing or support to actually release it. I also didn't have a band and didn't know any of the hundreds of musicians residing in my new hometown. Instead, I recorded all of the songs on a boom box in Brandon's bedroom (it had better acoustics than my room) and began dubbing cassette copies to give to anyone I met. I probably gave away about 500 of those suckers that year.

Those were crazy times for me. The news told stories of Kurt Cobain's suicide, River Phoenix' overdose, and OJ Simpson's bloody glove. I was still reeling from a divorce, the breakup of my beloved old band, and moving away from my family. My songs of this period reflected this turmoil, and I was fiercely proud of them.

Then, I moved on.

The next year, I began writing what became *Southern Rock Opera*. Also around that time, Cooley and I reunited and began working on forming what became Drive-By Truckers and writing the songs that became our first two albums. I got busy and left those older songs behind, occasionally pulling one or two out for a solo show or two, otherwise concentrating on other projects.

Ten years later, in late 2004, as the band was approaching some much needed time off and I approached the birth of my daughter, Ava Ruth, I began to think again about that old album and wondered how I would feel about those songs now. I began playing through some of the old cassettes from '94 and constructing potential lists of songs. I also started writing a bunch of new songs. When I started compiling the songs, old and new, together, I was surprised to see that the songs not only seemed to fit together, but they also seemed to work as a sort of point / counterpoint, as they almost seemed to stand in opposite points of view.

In January of 2005, a couple of weeks before Ava's arrival, I went into David Barbe's Chase Park Transduction Studios and recorded the majority of this album. I was fortunate to have some guests help in its creation. David Barbe and Brad Morgan both partnered this entire project. Most of my other DBT band mates appear, as did John Neff (who was

at that time not playing in DBT) and Don Chambers. Neff and Don were both frequently playing with me at my solo shows. My friends Will Johnson and Scott Danbom from my favorite band, Centro-matic, happened into town and were drafted for a couple of days of recording.

Another reason for me wanting to do this album was to record with my Dad. David Hood has been a professional musician all of my life. His credits include playing bass on The Staple Singers' immortal "I'll Take You There" and trombone on James and Bobby Purify's "I'm Your Puppet". His bass playing has graced records by Aretha Franklin, Percy Sledge, Wilson Pickett, Willie Nelson, Jimmy Cliff, Levon Helm, Bob Seger, Paul Simon, Rod Stewart, and Etta James, among hundreds of others as a member of the Muscle Shoals Sound Rhythm Section. Ironically, other than a quick Christmas song for a benefit album once, this is the first time we ever get to record together. He came to town a few days before my daughter's birth, and we recorded three songs together and had a total blast.

My original plan was to put the album out later that year and, perhaps, even do a short tour to promote it, but fate and business concerns intervened, and I ended up having to shelve the near-finished project for four years. During that time, I was encouraged and supported by David Barbe, who had fronted me the studio time and graciously agreed to keep the tab running until we could eventually bring this project to a close. I cringe to think what would have happened to this album without his help and support. Every year or so I would go in and work a little on it, recording three more songs and, occasionally, re-doing a part or two, but overall keeping the album true to its original vision.

Ava Ruth is now four years old. The band has in many ways moved musically closer to the way this album sounds. John Neff now plays in DBT full time and having a keyboard player is no longer such a foreign idea. The album is coming out almost exactly fifteen years after I wrote the title cut and the original batch of songs for it. I am still fiercely proud and thrilled to see it finally see the light of day.

Patterson Hood (in my office, Athens GA. Feb. 16, 2009)