

# GRADES OF ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Songwriter | Recording Artist | Performer | Author | Educator | MS Warrior

Hailing from Deep Ellum, Grades Of Absolute Truth (Justin Griffith) is a soulful indie songwriter who has been creating a unique brand since 2005. The elementary school teacher by day embeds conscious lyricism and self-awareness into every calculated move. With 6 independent tours and over 700 performances under his belt, he has shared the stage with artists ranging from Lupe Fiasco, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, and B.o.B to Leon Bridges and The Revivalists to Everlast, Mod Sun, and Wax to Cody Cannon of Whiskey Myers. How's that for variety? He's grown confident in the grey area he resides in, making it comfortable for music lovers that "listen to a little bit of everything."



Referred to as the illegitimate child of promiscuous genres, GOAT pulls inspiration from Brother Ali, CeeLo Green, Alice In Chains, Garth Brooks, Counting Crows, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, showing true diversity in his blend of music. Expect the depth of an introverted poet, the precision of a perfectionist, and the relevance of a leader with an emphasis on concept projects.

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"GOAT (Grades Of Absolute Truth) encapsulates the definition of diversity in music. One can describe his sound as southern, hovering somewhere in middle of a clash of rock, blues, and hip hop." -Poor Vida

At 8 years old, the nickname "GOAT" was given to Justin by a childhood friend after watching *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. During a scene in medieval times, Bill says "how 'bout that gnarly ole' goat dude." Starting as a joke, it eventually stuck to Justin and never went away. The acronym, Grades Of Absolute Truth, came later, when defining what his sound would be. Aside from GOAT's guitar obsession at the age of 12, his passion for writing quickly progressed into lyrical expression. After collaborating and performing in rock, blues, and metal bands and singing in choir throughout junior high and high school, he soon realized that his hunger for success outweighed that of anyone around him. He began producing solo material that evolved toward hip hop, but he thirsted for more knowledge of the recording industry. Without skipping a beat, he ventured on to study audio engineering and music production at The Recording Workshop in Chillicothe, Ohio (2001). After being certified, he returned home and inquired about attending The University of North Texas. With UNT being one of the top 3 music schools in the nation, the secretary told Justin that there was no point in him trying the program and that he'd "never succeed." He immediately enrolled and moved to Denton where he honed his performance skills by studying Classical Voice and graduated with a Bachelor of Music Degree in 2005 (Cum Laude).



"The way he commanded their attention, however, says something about his ability to perform, as well as the quality of music."

-TheUrbanAdvocate.com

In early 2005, GOAT & dj three6t, a long-time friend, began building a loyal fan base by performing several times a month in various venues throughout the



Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. By the time of GOAT's CD Release Party for *absolute truth* in August of 2006, they would perform for a packed house at Club Clearview. The LP received extremely positive reviews and Harder Beat

named the Release Party one of the "Best Shows of 2006."

"The theme focuses on alcohol, but does not simply glorify it. Instead, the good times had while imbibing are offset with the consequences of drunk driving." –Hip Side (about *absolute truth*)

Soon after the release of *absolute truth*, GOAT & dj three6t took a look at the current mainstream mixtape frenzy and decided it was

time to show some hometown love. *Dallas Got Next:*

*The Mixtape* was what mixtapes are *supposed* to be,

displaying seamless transitions and designed to listen

straight through. In tandem, GOAT committed to

freestyling with his pen – no revising, editing, or overthinking – just a raw

stream of consciousness. The duo proved a point with this project and released

it to an eager crowd at the Curtain Club in September of 2007. A solid



80-minute headlining performance concluded another strategically planned and perfect night.

"...he was seen darting about the stage that felt too small for the level of energy they exuded." -The Music Enthusiast

While desiring to help unify the Dallas-Fort Worth scene for a philanthropic



cause, Griffith founded Hip Hop Helps Heal (H4) in 2008. H4 was a non-profit collective built on the love of hip hop culture, where egos are left at home and contributors work selflessly.

The organization strived to counteract the negative

stereotypes often associated with hip hop and sought to unify individuals who

were interested in contributing their talents, time, and

efforts toward a greater cause. They pledged to throw

charity events to aid specific concerns of the community. H4

raised and contributed thousands of dollars to organizations,

such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation,

Genesis Women's Shelter, Toys For Tots, American Lung

Association, National Breast Cancer Foundation, Salvation Army, and Children's

Medical Center.



"H4 is the brainchild of eloquent rhyme-spitter G.O.A.T., whose sense of social responsibility is present in many of his actions."

-DC9 at Night

In February of 2009, GOAT & three6t launched the first volume of a collaboration series entitled *The 4 Track Sessions* with rapper JackRabbit James and singer/songwriter Elle in an intimate "invitation only" event. The effort formed a strong bond and support system among them. GOAT & three6t took their music out of state for the first time during the *Summer of Mileage Tour*, a weeklong west coast tour to promote their upcoming album. Their performances were received with immediate positive feedback at venues, such as Babylon in Fresno, California, and the Copper State Tavern in Glendale, Arizona. In November, after months of hard work and preparation, the long awaited birth of *Mileage* had arrived. A highlight for GOAT was including a song that featured Young Bleed, one of his favorite rappers from high school. Attendance surpassed 350 at their Official Release Party at the Curtain Club in Dallas.



"The elements of hip hop, blues, and soul are set with a foundation of Lupe Fiasco, Sly and the Family Stone, and Stevie Ray Vaughn." -Dallas Observer

Several doors were kicked open in 2010. GOAT joined forces with director Teddy Cool to produce "Highest Low," his first official music video. Filled with intense symbolism, the video shows the internal struggles that life brings us, each character personifying a different battle. It would later go on to be screened at the Fall Indie Fest. The same month the video was released, GOAT was invited



to perform at SXSW for the first time. The summer of 2010 brought the



successful completion of the *Southern Elements Tour*, a month long run covering Colorado, Utah, California, and Nevada. This opportunity gave GOAT another chance to continue building his west coast following. In the final days of 2010, he was booked to play at the House of Blues in Dallas, where a live band accompanied him. The show was the culmination of an amazing year and yet another result of his undeniable perseverance.

"...you'll learn that, in this incarnation, G.O.A.T. ain't playin'."  
-LIT Monthly

*Mileage: Retuned* was released the first week of 2011. The album was a collection of songs from *Mileage* that were each remixed by a different producer. The result was a showcase of multiple genres that gave fans a new take on songs they already knew and loved. Alongside the release came an



acoustic version of "Lost," GOAT's second official music video, also directed by Teddy Cool. It gave the public a more personal look at GOAT wandering the streets he calls home. To test a different realm of his skills, he entered a national jingle contest for Cash America and received 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Then came another milestone in his career. He was signed on to co-produce ArtLoveMagic's prestigious *Underground 2011*, a live show that boasts over 75 artists of various mediums. It set in motion the creation of a massive collaborative song. Produced by GOAT, it joined 14 musicians, each from different groups performing at the event. "We Rise Up" was performed once



and released in February, along with an official music video by uFilmhouse. In the same month, Dallas artist A.S.A.P. invited GOAT to record a verse on an upcoming cypher. A video was shot in a Plano restaurant, and then later released on YouTube

as "The Kitchen." Little did they know, this would spark the beginning of a giant movement in Dallas-Ft. Worth known as DFW Cypher, even covered by D Magazine. For the next couple of years, GOAT was an integral part of a 6 person committee bringing 10 official cypher videos, showcasing some of the top hip hop talent in the area. The videos organically accumulated over 90,000 views without any investors or sponsored posts.



"...DFW Cypher will save underground hip hop in North Texas."  
-D Magazine

Whether you're a close friend or a casual supporter of his music, it's no secret that GOAT is plagued with internal struggle. The concept for his next project was absolutely unique and served as a turning point for his ongoing battles. Writing toward a purpose was prevalent in past releases, but *the senseless ep* was brought to life with a



customized cleanse. For a minimum of 40 days, he committed to no alcohol, not being around smoke, no pills or medication, no fried food, eating red meat only once a week, no unnatural spices to foods, no soda, no hugging, no kissing, no intimacy or stimulation, looking away as soon as he catches himself visually admiring



women, no talking on the phone, no listening to music, no movies or television, getting a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity 4 times a week, no computer time except documenting the process, 8 hours of sleep daily, and drinking at least 64 ounces of water daily. Immediately after the cleanse, he conducted five 48-hour experiments with sensory deprivation. Each focused on cutting out one of your five senses for an entire weekend. As one can imagine, the most impactful was being blindfolded. All of these experiences built an inspirational bank to write from. After hearing the remix for "Cleansed In Dirt," GOAT reached out to Justin "Double J" Jones to be the sole producer of *the senseless ep*. With both Justins being the epitome of perfectionists, this project took time to mold into something they were confident about publishing. While the EP was entirely produced and written by GOAT & Double J, they performed the material with a full band. In April of 2015, it was time for the Release Party at Three Links in Deep Ellum. It received raving reviews and was nominated for Best Local Music Release by the Dallas Observer. Two songs were also nominated for Best Rap in the JPF Music Awards, one of which was their controversial anthem about firearms called "Lead."



"...his self proclaimed hip hop band is trending on the local scene, and they absolutely killed their set to the packed house at the release party for their newest EP entitled *senseless*." -AXS

The concept of GOAT's *#iFEEDuFEEDme Dinner Tour* unfolded during the summer of 2016. He packed up 2 acoustic guitars, merch, a suitcase, sleeping



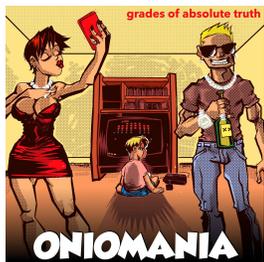
bag, and a cooler in his RAV4. Through social media, he put the word out that he'd travel to anyone's home to perform in living rooms in exchange for a meal and a place to crash if he was far from Dallas. Family & friends called him crazy for it. During the summers of 2016, 2017,

2018, and 2021, he traveled over 26,000 miles across 14 states and performed over 135 times in homes, venues, and all kindsa other spots. Wild, inspirational, shocking, awesome, scary things happened to him. These adventures opened up the door to focus on building individual connections with people, share his music in an intimate setting with hosts and their friends, and reconnect with his guitar.



"We had the amazing privilege of hosting G.O.A.T. at our house. It was beyond amazing for my soul. This was, by far, the highlight of my summer. Words can't express how much you gave us."  
-C. Hish

The next two singles released were continued collaborations between GOAT &



Double J. "Oniomania" is defined as an uncontrollable urge to shop. This song tells the story of parents, both obsessed with stuff, and depriving their child of quality time. The playful music, children's choir on the end of the chorus, and artwork

drive the point home. The moral of the story: parent your children, they're more important than things. "Her Ear's Eyes" was an unexpected change of pace and beautiful ballad, featuring Mike "Cowboy" Warren on guitar. The

lyrics tell a story that was directly inspired by a visually impaired kindergarten girl and is sure to catch you right in the feels. Of thousands of entries, "Her Ear's Eyes" was selected as a Music City SongStar semi-finalist in 2018.



"...the common element in his music is a well-structured track combined with a hopeful, but sometimes dark message." -The Naked Truth Magazine

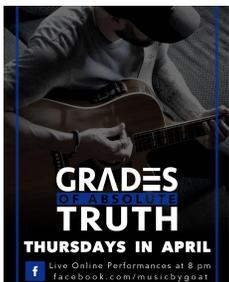
Throughout 2019, two full projects were released - *The 4 Track Sessions:*

*Volume 2* and *ONE*, an 8-song LP from The BARNyartists (indie hip hop duo with JackRabbit James) with beats by Hologram Dagger. Ending the year with a surprise release, a single and self-produced video was entered into KXT 91.7 FM's Tiny Cake Contest. Although the song "Yumminess" was a KXT favorite, it didn't clinch the gold.



"...not just something to bob your head to, but to open your mind with." -ArtLoveMagic

Barely into 2020, GOAT would experience the most difficult shift in his career



with the COVID lockdown. With intentions of being a light, he quickly planned and executed five online open write nights and five online performances throughout the month of April. The global pandemic continued, along with civil rights protests, riots, and economic crisis. And art imitates life. In response, a drum and bass

mixtape was released by DJ Ant Lion, featuring GOAT in a 22 minute lyrical venting session. Then came *ORANGE*, the unexpected video announcement that GOAT was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. With this vulnerable declaration came a new all encompassing website, 14 new merch items from his *orange line*, and the promise of a new solo album covering his acceptance of the diagnosis. During quarantine, he wrote and independently published his 1<sup>st</sup> book. *Past Presents Future* is a 100 page paperback that includes 32 poems accompanied by photos taken by Justin and a few of his favorite photographers.



Shortly after, an aggressive song called "30 Minute Meltdown" was unleashed by Grades Of Absolute Truth and instrumentalist Re-ID.

"For Justin Griffith a.k.a. Grades Of Absolute Truth, the message is as important as the music." –SphereMusic

Shifts began to take place in 2022. Between original performances, solo acoustic cover gigs, and merch sales, independent income started consistently matching teaching income. The BARNyartists unleashed *TWO*, an EP with music produced by Platinum, Gold, and Billboard Hot 100 guitarist/producer Cloak Beats. Additionally, GOAT began working closely with producer Billy Walker (Jaret Ray Reddick, Vaudeville). They released "Halfway Done," a



pensive realization of the midway point in life that concludes with hope.

Having a purpose to increase voter turnout, the iVOTED Festival invited Grades Of Absolute Truth to perform at their 2022 event. This non-profit is credited for launching the largest digital concert in history and booked GOAT, as he was one of the top trending acts in Texas.

"With Indie Rock and Gospel influence, listening feels like an uplifting church experience. Talking about real life struggles and overcoming obstacles as well as bringing you fun, positive vibes."

-ThisIsBedRock

Continuing to focus on what he's known for, 2023 yielded several diverse singles and multiple ingenious merch items. Conceptualized in New Orleans, "Liquor's to Blame" is a humorous declaration of responsibility avoidance featuring slide work from guitar virtuoso Neil Swanson and produced by Billy Walker. It dropped on GOAT's B-day, and rightfully so. RCMOTO, a laser etching company, decided to include weathered gray and red mahogany stained wood coaster sets in GOAT's store. Later, Poor Vida Hot Sauce created a series of



custom flavors for their four favorite emcees. Grades Of Absolute Truth's Lemon Pepper Garlic was a hit at the merch table and at multiple markets throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex (The BARNyartists got a flavor too). Soon after, those four emcees collaborated on a song called "The Sauce" featuring DJ Sean P and produced by Grammy Award Winning Producer Malex. The track was so hot, they had to shoot an official video for it at

Taqueria 287. The last merch drop for the year was a custom engraved BARNyartists baseball bat, designed and lasered by Smug Labs. Words, nor photos, do the precision of this piece of art justice. Partly inspired by David Shaw of The Revivalists, "Naughty 'Round Here" was presented in November with a mischievous smirk. Visualize the vibe of a cozy winter night in with your person. It definitely deserves a spot on your annual seasonal playlist. After all, doesn't everyone want a fresh song next to the classics? It just might be a little too sexy to be called a *Christmas* song - your decision though.



"GOAT offers something to chew upon if you are a philosophical or existential student." -Expatspost.com

Sounds like a busy life. It would be a mistake to leave out accomplishments elsewhere. Since 2005, Mr. G has taught between 600 and 700 kids a week, Kindergarten through 5th grade, at the same elementary school. That's quite a feat, along with doing up to 16 student performances a year. And being a private lessons instructor, DJ, and live sound engineer at Stage Volume LLC since 2014 adds to the resume. Purchasing a loft in the most popular neighborhood in Dallas and building The Intelligent South recording studio in it makes a strong statement, as well. Also, carrying on a separate artistic persona and running operations for The BARNyartists is an entirely different job, in itself. Dear Lord, does this dude ever sleep?



"I don't think you understand how much you have impacted my life. You taught me to express my voice through choir and life, both of which have led to encouragement."

-Note from a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

Grades Of Absolute Truth's professionalism is top-notch, and his obsessive-compulsive tendencies fend for a keen sense of self-reflection; therefore consistent progression is definite. His calling is to leave a positive imprint on this world through music, so expect that to stay in his crosshairs.



He intends to continue building a larger regional and national following by consistent performances, creative releases, increasing his streaming audience, presenting the most innovative merch one has ever seen,



and constantly being proactive online. Animals can be aggressive and unpredictable, so approach GOAT with caution. You never know if he'll pull up on his Harley or in his SUV. You might experience him singing and playing an acoustic guitar on someone's couch or spittin' lyrics into a custom microphone with a mask and grill on in front of several thousand hip hop fans. At one point, he

might have considered the grey area he resides in a weakness, but that mentality is long gone. He's grown confident in the blurriness of genres he nestled in, making it comfortable for music lovers that "listen to a little bit of everything." This life is meant for living, so variety and versatility are appreciated in the analytical eyes of Grades Of Absolute Truth.

"...a legitimate force to be reckoned with in the alternative Hip Hop/Rap genre." -JamSphere.com

