

# *The Crossing*

## *New Mexico*



*Feat Night Time Drive  
LJ the Kid  
"Shoulder"*

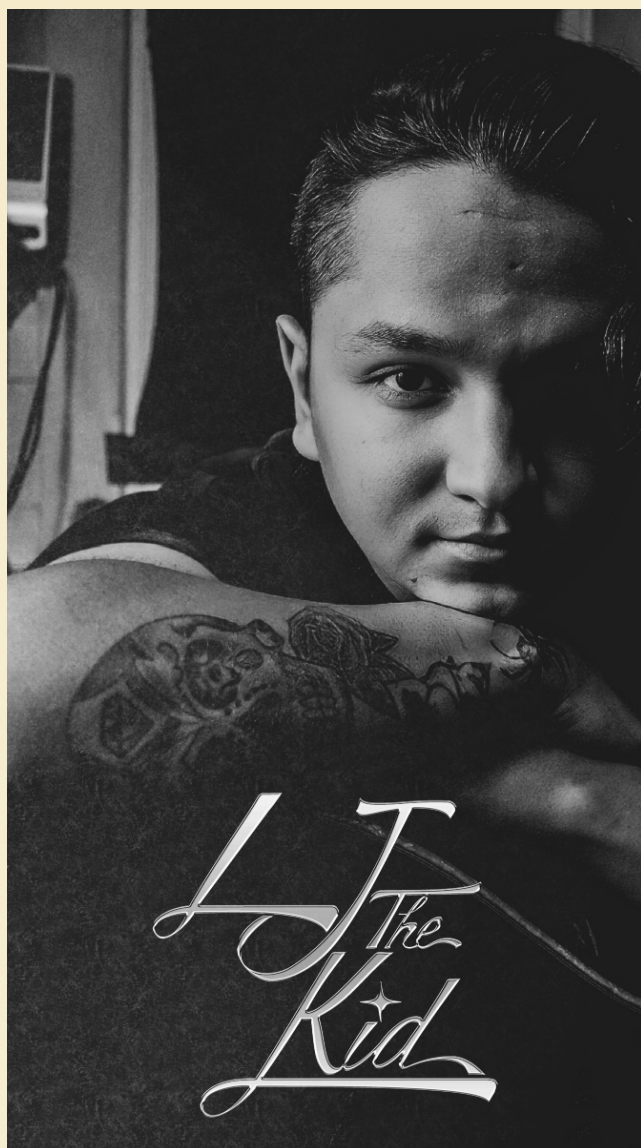


Image from LJ the Kid

## *“SHOULDER”*

*Written by LJ the Kid*

*Featuring Lillian Andrea*

*Ryan Montaña on trumpet*

*Tomas Tinoco on violín*

*John Mancha on guitarron*

*and vihuela*

*Produced by Night Time*

*Drive and 23:59*

*Music Video Organized and Produced by*

*LJ the Kid*

*Daylyn Kira (Entertainment Consultant)*

*Travis Ruiz (Lowrider photog w/ Lowrider Magazine)*

In 2004, Quentin Tarantino told BBC News “When people ask me if I went to film school, I tell them no, I went to films.”

But many people don’t fully understand the gravity of his modality “I watch films.”

He began by taping movies as a kid at home on a VHS recorder, whenever they aired on television. Living in Los Angeles as an adolescent with his mom, 15 yr old Quentin dropped out of school and eventually landed a job at a video store. Some may say he gained a lot of experience there, no doubt, but that damn video store owner hired him because he was already a film buff. Already a film buff at 15.

That was 1985.

One full generational cycle later, and young Lorenzo Jaramillo took an unknowingly similar path in Albuquerque, not cut out for traditional Duke City academia, and began skateboarding around town, searching for something that made more sense than a piece of textured paper from APS with his legal name on it. Along the journey of becoming an adult, Lorenzo was quasi-adopted into a renowned music camp, mentored, and groomed by some pretty rad and noble musicians. Lorenzo (aka LJ the Kid) became interested from their influence, no doubt, then fascinated by his own subconscious development, then addicted to the most elusive drug in the world: sound.

LJ the Kid quickly worked his way up the music industry’s sound engineer and rigging ladder, interned, and ultimately became a high-demand sound asset for top tier touring musicians.

Then boom, covid and uncertainty.

Everything came to a screeching halt. Every lowrider in the nation hit that dump switch one last time as compressed air hissed from the relief valves. The global rat race had stopped.

Lorenzo’s elusive sound chase didn’t.

That was 2020.

Born inside his soul from a collection of cultural and mystical sources, the subconscious sound began to emerge and during the quarantine, he began humming and singing a tune in his head, then out loud. The beginning of a song. From a sound engineer, who was so fascinated by the art of sound technology and production, he became an industry expert at a very early age, by listening to the music from a crowd's perspective, observing the energy of massive crowds, interning under the greatest songwriters, performers, and technicians; learning from the best while honing in ever-so-closer to his own signature sound.

During the covid-enforced slow down period, LJ began working on the energy that was likely born into his subconscious, eventually surfacing to the conscious mind, to produce a new era of music that he, and his brand, Night Time Drive are coining Chicano Pop, a blend of Chicano soul and American pop, with significant influences from hip-hop, R&B, and electronic music. An era that will likely begin a new generational genre of popular music with a uniquely authentic New Mexican origin.

To celebrate the fruits of their labor, LJ the Kid and the many talented collaborators on "Shoulder," the first single release, put together a video shoot in Los Ranchos, and asked the community to come hang out with them for the evening. Before the event, Lorenzo reached out to longtime friend, Daylyn Kira, also an entertainment consultant, and Travis Ruiz, a well-connected lowrider photographer with credits and influences in Lowrider Magazine, to organize a nostalgic cruise in, complete with vibrant lowriders, street food, and the unreleased song being featured for the video shoot.

Mr Duck Cine directed and filmed the video shoot and began well before the community rolled into the El Camino Dining Room parking lot and along 4th street for the night time action shots. "Shoulder" has traditional and spiritual overtones with looming elements of loss and uncertainty that plague humans today, which makes this style of Chicano soul and pop so beautifully captivating and romantic. Mr. Duck had the task of capturing the electricity of the most convincing conduit of romanticism ever witnessed: a man pining for a woman to give him a chance to make her feel safe and loved in a world that tragically may end soon. Sneak previews of the film crew's outcome have revealed that he captured it in supreme cinematic fashion.



For the first release, Lorenzo took a previous beat from music producer and collaborator ("23:59") and later worked in a classic blend of Mexican instrumentals and melodies, and mashed it all to a romantically proven, mid-century doo wop title from Paul Anka. Lorenzo wrote the lyrics to give it a modern Chicano soul and pop vibe, laced with old-world instrumentals from some of the most respected musicians around, like Ryan Montañó on trumpet, adding a traditional, yet exhilarating theatrical element to the story; John Mancha on guitarrón and vihuela, giving brilliant old-world contrasts in the arrangement; Mariachi Albuquerque great, Tomas Tinoco, added the violin in the perfect amount of intense, sincere, yet uplifting romanticism the art requires.

In the song, Lilian Andrea provided the sensual vocals to give the art a convincingly utopian tone, pleading the listener to connect with both characters in the story, while adding a layer of longing and uncertainty that the real life Lorenzo grew up with as young Burqueño. In the video, Estrella Vigil, dancer and choreographer, plays the formidable love interest in the story and is featured throughout the film. Lilian Andrea returns to the music video as herself, and packs a lightning rod of visual and audible curiosity to the story, adding a bone-chilling sensation of mystery and longing with her vocals that added brilliantly to the nostalgic film era of yesteryear.



I met up with Lorenzo a few weeks later to discuss the video shoot, songwriting and production credits, and to grab any last-minute contributors and maybe a little backstory. Once we finished the music side of the chat, he asked “what did you see?”

Stringer: “I think the lowriders represent a nostalgic expression of art and culture, but also serves as a reminder, if not a subconscious act, to slow down. To get out of the rat race and get back to community; creating art; creating music; creating a world that slows down to socialize with their neighbor, their community, and with other creatives. On that day, I saw it clearly. A stretch of road with classic, post-war lowriders, sprinkled among more modern smartphones-on-wheels, and a parking lot set up with a row of lowriders, set against a near-full Sturgeon moon, that illuminated the Sandias, adding a sensational atmosphere to the looming thunderstorms building in the south valley. The mere presence of a single lowrider encourages others slow down and take notice. Take that same magical energy and apply it to a whole community and it’s a romantically nostalgic evening.

Stringer: “I saw the community of Los Ranchos, and several visitors driving by, become the magical energy of gratitude throughout the village, adding a backdrop of organic realism to the film location.”

What makes Chicano pop music romantic? Conflict. Any variety will do, but LJ the Kid effectively blends several human conflicts into one song. Brilliantly produced, we see modern battles within the human psyche: longing, fear, and vulnerability, while embarking on the never-ending quest to find authentic self in a world designed, and unjustifiably expected to be compliant. They take artistic liberties in their music that work extremely well for their sound and their message. How do we know Night Time Drive did the damn thing?

The village came to hear it, see it, and to participate in it. They came to celebrate it. Willingly and without recompense.

What made that night in Los Ranchos magical?

It was the open-air love for one another, and love for the community that made the video shoot magical, as friends and strangers alike came out in full Chicano love and unconditional force to support a fellow human who gets it and is now doing the damn thing. Friends like Leroy Sandoval (Slums of Harvard) stepping up to hold a large set light for the night time camera crew and running quick tasks around the set. Those acts of kindness, selflessness, and trust are only bestowed upon those who have earned them. The community showed up to tell Lorenzo that he has their full and unconditional love and support.



Photo provided by LJ the Kid

LJ the Kid gets that his music is an eclectic arrangement of Chicano classics, American oldies, modern pop, and R&B, yet is an alluring and viable entry to the new generational cycle we are entering (post-pandemic; post-2010's trap and emo music). It's the beginning of a new, more humanistic and romantic musical genre; a nod to the low-and-slow vibe of yesteryear with a wonderfully timeless tune that will transmit well into the future.

What makes LJ the Kid's music and the Chicano community magical? It is a culturally derived expression in the form of sonic energy that Burque didn't know it needed. Night Time Drive, LJ the Kid, and the wildly talented supporting casts of musicians and producers, used emotionally convincing arrangements set to a sensational atmosphere of love and community, with a catchy and timeless tune that ushered human souls to a new epicenter of a new generational beginning. And it all happened on the very streets Lorenzo Jaramillo, the kid, skateboarded on, rejecting societal norms, all while searching for his purpose by doing noble work to chase that elusive sound, emanating from his soul.



Written and photographed by Joe Smith, Stringer

Digital Cover Art by Nora Madonna





NIGHTTIMEDRIVE  
& LJ THE KID  
PRESENTS

# 'SHOULDER'

PERFORMED BY  
*LJ The Kid*

PRODUCED BY  
*NightTimeDrive*  
&  
23:59

ST. LILIAN ANDREA, RYAN MONTANO, MANCHA, AND MARIACHI ALBUQUERQUE  
& THE NIGHTTIMEDRIVE COLLECTIVE

