

HEDLEY

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PHOTOS BY IVAN OTIS

Jacob Hoggard, lead singer of pop-punk foursome Hedley, sounds like he just woke up from a long night of drinking. He's groggy, soft spoken and thinks he's in Kingston – he can't quite remember. He admits that he had a few too many shots of Jagermeister – the band's drink of choice – the night before.

Hoggard's in the midst of a gruelling 26-day cross Canada tour, so you can't blame the guy for wanting to have a little fun. Plus, he just found out that Hedley was nominated for two Juno Awards. Hoggard admits all this success is overwhelming, especially considering he risked his rock 'n' roll reputation last year as a contestant on Canadian Idol.

It was clear from the start of Canadian Idol that Hoggard shouldn't have been there. In one famous moment, the singer donned a purple skin tight suit and sang David Bowie's Space Oddity, almost making a mockery of the entire show. Fortunately for Hoggard, stunts like these helped him finish 3rd and gain a legion of screaming teenage fans who have now helped Hedley sell over 100,000 records.

...THE LAST TIME I WAS BEHIND THE BAR IN MY UNDERWEAR POURING BOTTLES OF LIQUOR ON MYSELF.

Why did Hoggard even try out for the show you ask? Well, UMM interviewed the flamboyant frontman in March and asked him that very question. We also asked him a bunch of other stuff like why he likes to get naked after shows, and how he got expelled from school. Want to know the answers? Then read on.





UMM: It's hard to imagine someone like you trying out for Canadian Idol. Was it your idea?

JH: My friends put me up to it. They bet me to do it during one drunk night. I said, "I'll show you!" I went to the first preliminary in Toronto and I only packed one change of clothes because I didn't expect to be there. I ended up wearing the same clothes for seven days because I stayed for the whole thing.

UMM: You must have been shocked.

JH: I thought it was hilarious, dude. There were people there whose hearts were breaking when they got kicked off and I thought it was the funniest thing in the world.

UMM: What would have happened if you won?

JH: If I won? I would have probably moved to Guam.

UMM: You do owe some success to Idol though.

JH: Oh ya. I think it has affected my career positively because of the boost it gave me, and the opportunity to really establish something and build off of something. But at the same time there's a stigma there now that people just try to write it off. I don't really give a fuck about that because all that really does is give me and the band a drive to write much better music and be that much better and shove it down people's throats and say, "see shut the fuck up, you know, we're really good."

UMM: Where do you think you'd be right now if you didn't take that Idol bet?

JH: Hammering nails and drinking beer. I'm skilled in construction.

UMM: You recently wrapped up a tour with Simple Plan. What was it like playing for huge crowds?

JH: It was amazing. A packed 300 person club is always going to have its charm, but there's also something about 15,000 people staring down at you. It's quite blood rushing.

UMM: How has the experience prepared you for your own tour?

JH: Playing all the stadiums gave us a handle on a big stage and an ability to play a crowd better and taking that and putting it on a smaller stage in a theatre, or even in a bar, makes our show that much bigger.

UMM: Do Simple Plan like to party?

JH: No, but we definitely did. We brought our Jagermeister machine with us. It ended up hurting more than it helped.

UMM: You're pretty rabid message board posters. A lot of bands don't take the time to respond to their fans online the way you do.

JH: Fans are a band's lifeblood. If a band doesn't do that they're screwed. The only thing going is the people supporting you. To not embrace them and not create a relationship with them is shooting yourself in the foot. These are the people who are picking you up and requesting your videos and coming to your shows, and if you're not going to be there and create that relationship with them, then there's nothing there for them and there are a million other bands in the world.

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UMM: But you guys are pretty busy, how do you keep it up?

JH: It's easy to get distracted and do other things rather than go and say hi to the fans and post on the internet, but after every single show we're signing autographs for every single person in the building. We'll stay three, four, five hours and just have a lineup of people waiting. But the fact that we do that, it's showing our fans we really want to be there for them and be available.

UMM: It looks like the hard work is paying off. You were nominated for two Junos. Did you ever dream of being nominated when you were a kid?

JH: Ya, totally. It's quite the prestigious Canadian award so I was pretty shocked to be nominated for one. Now I make all my family members refer to me as Juno nominee Jacob Hoggard.

UMM: How do you evaluate your prog-

ress over the last couple years? It's been quite the journey.

JH: Well, everything kind of comes in like little sips. We'll be so busy on tour doing whatever we're doing, then we get news like, "okay guys, you have press at noon, you got nominated for two Junos and lunch is at five." I don't think there's been a chance yet to step back and go, wow. It's like when you're a kid and you're growing up and getting taller; you'll never notice yourself getting taller but everyone else does.

UMM: Changing gears here. I heard you were expelled from high school.

JH: (Laughs) I lit my desk on fire actually. It couldn't have been more perfect of a setting. It was note taking time and I was in the middle of a class and it was dark and the overhead was on and I was playing with a Zippo lighter. I had one of those inside, hollowed out desks and I accidentally ignited a bunch of papers. It combusted rather quickly in the middle of the classroom. I shot off my chair and it created quite the little scene. That was in Grade 12.

UMM: So you didn't get through high school?

JH: No. I went into construction after that and started learning how to build houses and became an apprentice carpenter.

UMM: What's the best Canadian city to party in?

JH: Saskatoon is our party city. We made a lot of cool friends there so every time we go there they shut the bar down and we have our way. The night usually ends up with us being half naked. The last time I was behind the bar in my underwear pouring bottles of liquor on myself. And we ended up getting into a big battle royal - me, Mike (Herrera of MXPX) Dave (Hinsley of Faber), and (Hedley guitarist) Dave Rosen and some guitar techs. We got into a huge fucking rumble. It was awesome. And then I think we got naked and the night just turned into a blur.

UMM: What about your female fans? Do they follow your lead?

JH: (Laughs). Umm, no. A large amount of them are under the age of 18 so we have to maintain a certain level of discretion sometime.

UMM: Well, maybe in like seven years.

JH: They'll all be womanly and all of my songs will be about revealing your breasts.