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Bernie Twins Live Out Lifelong Dream

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

When you head south on Highway 25 from Dexter, you quickly find yourself in Bernie.

The sights are typical of small-town America: ‘mom and pop’ restaurants, a park, and a small bank all greet you as you enter town. Making a left-hand turn onto Main Street produces similar results - small shops populate the strips of buildings on both sides of the road - until you look to your left; while the facade of the building once read *Western Auto*, it now reads *The Walker Bros*. You’ll be quite surprised what you’ll find inside - its now a state-of-the-art recording studio.

Clinton and Coty Walker are the twin sons of Tommy and Carol Walker, and have been musicians for ‘as long as we can remember’, joked Coty. The brothers are life-long residents of Bernie, and started out playing hard rock music with a Christian influence when they were in middle school. Now, they are living out their dream of owning and operating a recording studio, while continuing to make music.

Clinton handles the business end of the studio, and through his ‘day job’ as a teacher in the Holcomb School District, was able to provide the initial funding to open the studio.

”We started leasing three years ago, built our first room, and put a little money in this place. Our initial lease was for two years, and then we built our main room. That’s all we

had to work with for a while, until I got my first teaching contract; then, we were able to get a loan so we could buy the place and get started, and that was a year ago,” he recalled. “For the last year, since we figured out we would be able to do this thing long-term, we established our business and rolled with it. We started working on the face of our company, and we’ve been an LLC for about a year. We just started promotion, primarily through **Facebook**, and now the company has developed into a lot of other things through our music.”

Coty is a self-taught recording guru, and handles the day-to-day production operations within the studio.

”It all started whenever I figured out I couldn’t make good grades in college,” Coty joked. “I fell in love with engineering when I was 15; I always ran the soundboard for our Sense the Fall shows. When we decided to do the studio, we decided Clinton would finish up school, become a teacher, and help lay our foundation financially.”

”There is a lot of skepticism starting a recording studio in Bernie, Missouri. It’s not the most promising, lucrative business that you would think to start here,” Coty continued. “It’s risky anywhere, but it’s even riskier in a place that doesn’t that many musicians down the road that will pay the amount that it takes to operate a business like this. We just had the faith that we knew we were supposed to be here; it’s where we were raised; we didn’t want to leave home. If we can do it somewhere else, then we can make a good product here and people will come to it. That’s what we set out to do.”

On top of running a studio, the brothers have continued their first love: writing and recording music. Also under *The Walker Bros.* monicker, Clinton and Coty have transitioned to writing country music, and have produced a music video that rivals anything you would see on CMT today. Their first single, *The Life* celebrates facets of growing up in a small town, and has tallied over 11,000 views on YouTube.

”I started jokingly writing country music about a year ago,” Clinton said of the song. “I brought it home to Coty and we started writing some funny country stuff. Before we wrote ‘The Life’, all we’d ever done was funny, goofy country songs.”

“That song really is 100 percent our life. It is what it is; people who have heard the song know the hook in the chorus about Aunt Debbie’s sweet tea,” Coty added. “When we were in high school, we went to Doug [Johnson]’s house for some of Aunt Debbie’s sweet tea, it’s just what we did. Growing up fishing

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with Dad...that's why the video is what it is."

Clinton and Coty have teamed up with Chaz Watkins as their manager; Watkins has over 25 years of experience in the country and southern rock arena, and he has high expectations for the brothers.

"Five years from now, they're going to be on a tour bus playing every big concert and festival across the United States. They're going to come home and work in their own studio, but they'll have people running this studio for them when they're in and out," he said. "This isn't like a big transformation for them to say 'Oh, we're country artists'. There's not a transition between country music and country boy; the only difference is one has a guitar in his hands."

"If you listen to the first line of 'The Life', it's 'Where I grew up, there's nothing wrong with being country'. They're telling stories of life that they've seen here in Bernie, and there are more small-town people across the country than there are big city people, and big city people, deep down, want to be country people in this market," Watkins continued. "City people that like country music, if they've never rode on a tractor, they'd really like to, whereas you and me, we've all rode on a tractor, but we didn't like it because we were working."

Watkins still has strong ties in Nashville, and noted that the brothers have several things in their favor when it comes to landing a major-label recording contract.

"Their youth is very marketable, and they fit in today's country music," he said. "The other part of them that is so marketable is that it doesn't matter how big the crowd is; there could be two people or 400, it makes no difference. They're both giggling and laughing up on stage, having a good time. *That* you can't teach. You can't teach that from me; they have that x-factor, it-factor, whatever you want to call it; they do it because they love it and it shows no matter what they're doing. You can't put that in someone, and you can't teach it."

"They do things musically that, as a musician and singer, you're not supposed to be able to do. I think a lot of it is from being twins; I don't know why it happens, but I've never seen it anywhere else," he continued. "If we can find a way to market *that* and put it in a category where people can see it, I think it's a no-brainer. As small as the project was, we started recording their album here, put a video out, and it's taken off like wildfire in this small-market area. What happens when we have someone distribute this in a large-market area? I think that's the only thing that we have to get from point A to point B right now is

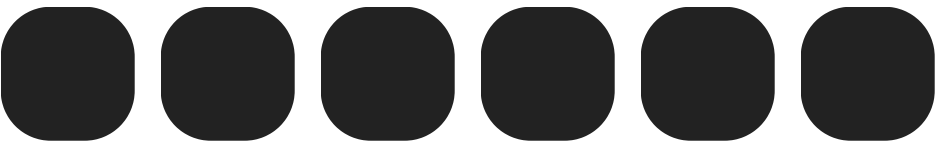
someone that has the belief that we have, to say ‘Hey, throw this on a wall and see if it sticks’, because if they ever meet them, it will stick.”

The Walker Bros. Held a release party of their debut album on Saturday (March 17) night in front of a sold-out crowd at the Bernie High School gym. ‘The Walker Bros. EP’ is available now on iTunes.

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