

## Kiefer Sutherland Bio

The most powerful songs come from real life. They are sifted from the ashes of heartbreaking loss and colored by the joyful hues of life's little triumphs. Like most of us, Kiefer Sutherland has known his share of pain and pleasure, and like any true creative spirit, he possesses that innate ability to channel his personal experience into art that strikes a universal chord. He does just that in the songs on his debut album, *Down in a Hole*.

"I've had a pretty colorful life and I think the songs reflect that," Sutherland says of the 11-song collection. "I've had the great fortune of being able to do what I want to do for a living. I've been able to support my family very well as a result of that, so in many ways I consider myself to be one of the luckiest people I know. Having said that, there's a lot of pain throughout the record. You can get everything you want, but it doesn't mean that you are going to be able to skate through your life without pain. There are a few songs about getting through and getting past that."

Sutherland has indeed lived a life of extremes. Off screen, he's been known as a passionate personality with a penchant for hard living. He's earned the respect of real cowboys as a competitive team roper on the rodeo circuit. In his professional life, he's become one of the most celebrated actors of his generation.

Sutherland is a communicator who enjoys drawing listeners into the characters and communities that populate his songs. He does that with his acting and he does it on a deep and more personal level in his music. Many of his songs are like pages torn from a diary, rippling with angst and gut level emotion. Yet he also has a keen eye for observation and chronicling other's anguish as he does in the powerful closing track "Gonna Die," which was written after he'd helped a veteran who was having a PTSD-triggered episode. Lyrically, the songs encompass a variety of topics and emotions, and musically the album rests comfortably in the Americana space yet is richly flavored by country influences and buoyed by rock undertones and soulful grooves.

"It's not complicated record. These are songs that represent me. I've been writing since I was 15, but it was always just for me. It really took another turn when we started Ironworks," he says of the independent label he launched in 2002 with his friend and business partner Jude Cole.

Sutherland's goal was to help launch newcomers he was passionate about and give voice to artists deserving of a platform. They launched such acts as Billy on Poison, HoneyHoney and Rocco DeLuca & The Burden.

Sutherland enjoyed seeing these acts build an audience, and it was Cole who reminded him he had something to say too. "Jude was a real catalyst for me and gave me confidence not only in the songs, but the way I perform them and I'll always be grateful for that," he says of Cole, who produced the album and was a songwriting partner. "The writing of the songs was personal to me and the idea to make the record and to put them out came later. I've made plenty of mistakes, as I believe most people do over the course of a lifetime, but I own them and they are mine. I don't think I've spent much of my life trying to pretend I was anything different. For me, being able to put these songs out is not something I'm shy about. My career has been in film, on stage and on television. I think the real power of those mediums---and one of the reasons why people go to see us---is because there's something comfortable about knowing that you are not alone whether it's in heartbreak or humor. It's a way of letting you know that you are not the only person going through any set of circumstances. Music, to me, has always spoken to that in a profound and powerful way. If someone hears a song that I've written and goes, 'Oh I felt that way too,' then I would be very proud of that."

Sutherland's debut album delivers songs that are poignant and relatable whether it's the achingly beautiful loss that echoes throughout "Truth in Your Eyes" or the clever introspection of "My Best Friend," which opens with the lines: "Most of the people that I've known have let me down or caused me pain/ Most of the people that have known me too would probably say the same." And though "Can't Stay Away" seems as if was written about a woman, Sutherland admits it was actually written about a bar he used to frequent. "Going Home" has a sultry groove that gives Sutherland's textured, soulful vocals a chance to shine as he delivers the world-weary lyric.

Sutherland grew up admiring the music of Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, David Bowie, Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson, and their influence is reflected in the careful attention to each phrase and the authenticity with which he approaches the craft. Yet Sutherland is more than just a skilled songwriter, he's a compelling vocalist. There's an authority in his voice that transcends mere entertainment and makes each song a riveting event.

When someone has truly lived life, it's easy to feel it in the music they create. "Music has always spoken to me as a person more deeply than any other thing, more than painting, more than television or theater, more than poetry. Music is the one thing I can always turn to and I'll know exactly where I'm at," Sutherland says. "There are certain albums I can put on that I know will make me feel a certain way. I can listen to some early David Bowie and it takes me back to my first job as a short order chef in a restaurant. I can listen to Dire Straits and I'm driving across country from New York to LA and I'm excited because I feel like my life is beginning. These artists represent a time or space in my life and a sensibility. There are some records that I have a really difficult time listening to the entire record because it will take me back to a not so pleasant time, so I have always been uniquely aware of how music does impact me.

"The decision to make this album was honestly quite organic. There were songs that I had written that my best friend, Jude Cole, a musician I deeply respect, really liked. He suggested I record them. I was willing to do so in the hopes that another artist might want to use them. With Jude's encouragement, two songs led to four, four songs led to six. He then suggested I complete a record. If I didn't like it, we could always put it away in a drawer, no harm, no foul. When push came to shove, I had to acknowledge, not only did I like my songs, I also really liked the album that the two of us made together, which leads to the present day. As excited as I am to have the record be heard by other people, the immediate benefit has been playing these songs in small bars and clubs around California. I honestly enjoy playing in a bar. It's given me perspective on performing that I've never had before, and let's face it, it's the most constructive two hours I've spent in a bar."