



Eric Lee Beddingfield: **CROSSING THE LINE**

He's a poet, a wordsmith, an image weaver with a voice that makes Waylon Jennings, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Led Zeppelin fans sit up and listen. *Eric Lee Beddingfield* is a small-town, flat-bed truck loaded to capacity with stories of everyday life. His haunting melodies and driving rhythms sizzle like rubber tires on hot, Georgia asphalt.

*If the way I live is gonna be the death of me
Better get my kicks while I can still breathe
If you want to have a good time baby, I'm the one
If you want to raise hell, hell, I'll show you how it's done (#)*

The talents of this Southern boy are undeniable. But his music would never have reached the county line - much less Music City - if his 6'3", linebacker frame had not been stopped at the line of scrimmage.

In the time it takes to sack a quarterback, Beddingfield's gridiron days were snatched away. During spring training a disc slipped in his neck. Without warning Eric's eyesight vanished and all movement in his right side disappeared. And in a single, surreal moment Georgia Southern University's practice turf turned into a field of fading dreams.

*Things sure seem to be looking up
Hard times on the rise
I can't take it, I can't make it
I'm just doing good to be alive (+)*

ELB's future, like his paralyzed body, was at a standstill. It was as if he were stuck on the field unable to get past that line of scrimmage. But living on the borderline was nothing new for Eric Lee Beddingfield.

Growing up near Augusta, Georgia, not far from the South Carolina line, Eric was surrounded by boundaries - but never let them fence him in. Back in high school he overlooked the well-drawn divisions of the teenage caste system and made friends with everyone from the not-so-popular to those voted the "Best..." Even his trusty truck crossed the line of convention. Although his ol' Ford was the worst looking ride in the student parking lot, it was always occupied with the best looking girls. Eric's wheels put a whole new spin on the term 'pickup.'

Teenage Beddingfield even crossed the borderline that defined the typical southern hell raiser. Every Friday night he put his 'A' on the line for his high school football team. But during the week, the linebacker tackled his books, earning A's - right down the line. Of course, he wasn't shy about knockin' back a few bottles with his buds. But when no one was looking, Eric would sneak his father's guitar onto his lap; strum a few chords, and dream about life beyond the fences of the family farm.

*On high school graduation day
I was damned near runnin' when I crossed that stage
That beat up truck was my saving grace
Getting me the hell out of nowhere USA (>)*

Applying that boundless, independent mindset to his paralyzed state, the GSU sophomore's feeling miraculously returned. And building on that momentum, it didn't take long for Eric's restored sight to refocus on getting back in the game.

But though his mobility and vision returned with remarkable speed, Beddingfield and his doctors were slow to see eye to eye. After a battery of tests finally confirmed the reality of Eric's herniated disc, his doctors made their position clear, "*If playing football is your choice, we should go ahead and order your wheelchair now.*"

*There aint no doctor in the world gonna fix it
They don't make string strong enough to stitch it
I should have known you were gonna be trouble right from the start
I used to wear that bad boy on my sleeve
Till you showed me how easy you could make it bleed
I never felt pain till you gave me a broken heart (=)*

Devastated by the notion that he would never again play college ball, Eric became a recluse; a hermit in his own university dorm. When his other classes were not in session, he would cloister himself in his room, put on some Travis Tritt and Lynyrd Skynyrd and knock back a few bottles, all by himself.

Eric's two weeks of trauma were nothing compared to his two-months of self-imposed solitary. Getting passed the boundaries of his own making was the hardest line he ever had to cross. And the only thing that eased his independent mind was his guitar, and the chords his father taught him.

His six-string became his constant companion, and slowly Eric's emotions found their way into the music. Alone in his room, ELB's pent-up energy found an outlet in an unexpected flood of creativity. And soon Beddingfield was crossing the boundary of his depression with songs of his own creation...

*I feel right at home living in the fast lane
Tearing up the tracks like a runaway freight train
Never left a drop in the bottom of a bottle
Rev it up, wide open, I'm livin' Full Throttle (#)*

His dorm room 'sessions' began to draw a crowd. The more he played, the more the place filled up. In time, his impromptu concerts breached the borders of his room and spilled out into the hallway. And before long the nearby staircase was Standing Room Only.

When Eric's friends finally persuaded him to venture out and party with them at a local bar, the former athlete found himself intrigued by the on-stage talent. After hearing a few cover tunes and downing a couple of beers, Beddingfield heard himself actually admit out loud what he never dreamed possible...

"Hell, I can do that!"

Soon, Eric and his best friend Andy Teck formed an acoustic duo. And just after Spring break, a mere year after the accident, the two debuted at a local university hangout, Statesboro's *Woodin Nickel*.

Before he could take to the stage that first night, Eric was so nervous he downed a fifth of Jack Daniels. And thus began a ritual which continued even after Chris Hortman and Frank Sherrod turned the duo into band, a year later. By then, Beddingfield's pre-show bottle was such a tradition, the group often went to their gigs by way of a "wet" county, just to make sure the foursome got their fifth. Naturally the boys named the band, *County Line*.

Just after crossing the boundary of 1999, *County Line* was hailed, '*Best Original Country Band in Georgia.*' And as the new century began, front man Eric found his foursome opening for the very artists that once vibrated the windows of his ol' pickup; Travis Tritt, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Charlie Daniels and even the legendary, George Jones.

Today, the multiple talents of this college grad-Southern boy are undeniable. Eric's music is spreading from college dorms and beer halls to headlining venues throughout the south. In fact the echo of his screaming fans has reached all the way to Music City, itself - where the composer has just completed his first solo, *Double Diamond* self-titled CD, "*Eric Lee Beddingfield.*"

*I don't answer to nobody, ain't scared of anything
I'm the one who blows through your town, just like a hurricane
I've got whiskey on my breath and venom in my veins
I've paid my dues long enough and its time you know my name (^)*

Collaborating with seasoned Nashville producers Kent Wells and Tony Smith, Eric's 12-track collection busts through the boundary of the usual and resets the bar for every string-strumming storyteller hereafter.

*The day Wal-Mart opened up
You could hear the dead-bolts being shut
To the front doors of every store down on Main Street*

*Now no one comes around
To window shop this little ghost town
Sidewalks aint been used in so long
One more piece of small town America gone (*)*

From “*Smalltown America*” and “*Right Hand Man*”, to his “*Train, Train*” duet with Dolly Parton and guest Lynyrd Skynyrd/Blackfoot guitarist Ricky Medlock, Eric has definitely moved past the scrimmage line into a league of his own. He’s a wordsmith, an image weaver, a modern day poet of everyday life...

*My roots run deep into this ground
There’s rebel blood in my veins
And as long as I’m alive
I’ll have my share of southern pride
And until my dying day
That’s how I’ll stay (<)*

From sneaking off to practice his guitar, to getting back on his feet when his dreams didn’t get him far, ELB’s gained a lot of ground. No longer living on the borderline, Beddingfield is now a resident of Music City. Overlooking its well-drawn divisions, he’s makin’ friends, and setting his sights on being one of Music’s “Best.”

Though surrounded by boundaries, they’ve never fence him in. And with the support of *Double Diamond*’s CEO Franklin Wolfe, Eric’s biggest fan, the future’s just another border to a gifted hell raiser who’s still crossin’ lines.

- Barton Green

Eric Lee Beddingfield
Double Diamond Entertainment
2005

Chase The Devil
Full Throttle (#)
Something You Make
Keep The Change (##)
Nowhere, USA (>)
Kill The Mullet

Only Thing Going Down (+)
Right Hand Man (^^)
Smalltown America (*)
That’s How I’ll Stay (<)
Never Felt Pain (=)
Train, Train