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COUNTRY SINGER-SONGWRITER CAYLEE HAMMACK ON HER LOVE OF DAVID BOWIE, FINDING STRENGTH AS AN ARTIST

Her lead single, “Family Tree,” is true to her life story, the Georgia native explains



Caylee Hammack is from Ellaville, Georgia, but never really felt like she fit in; she often describes herself as a “hippie in a hillbilly town.” Last Friday, she joined *Rolling Stone* for “Morning Sessions” — an interview series presented by the IHG Rewards Club Premier Credit Card — with writers and editors from the staff, and described how she made it from her small town to her current place as one of the most exciting new talents coming out of Nashville’s country scene.

The journey, as she described it in her interview, was not without struggle. After high school, she turned down a scholarship to stick with her first love. When that didn’t work out, she began to plot her way to Nashville, and to a music career. To get there required a few weeks spent in her car, camped out in a Target parking lot, until Hammack was able to find steadier gigs singing for four hours a night at honky tonk bars on the notoriously hard-nosed scene on Broadway. She spent years there (and while she says it didn’t pay great, it allowed her to stop sleeping in her car), learning the power of hard work and, likely more importantly, honing her craft as a singer and a songwriter. “But getting to do what you love every day... even if it’s crappy, you’re getting to do what you love.”

“Family Tree,” her lead single, is a sharp-witted, keenly song about chronicling what seems to be a typical family (albeit with an atypically catchy chorus, courtesy of Hammack’s tornado of a voice). According to Hammack’s interview, it’s all true — including the line, “Sister smoked all the Camels in the county last week” — and while her family wasn’t entirely pleased with all the chronicling, they do seem to appreciate the fact that it’s a great song. “Yeah, we all know we have issues but we don’t talk about it at supper,” Hammack explains. “It was really about exploring, in-depth, all the quirks but doing it in a humor-filled, loving way. I’m not judging anyone; I’m the crazy one in my family. I admit it!”