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CRS 2019 ← → NEW FACES

Jimmie Allen

Allen's Stoney Creek debut single "Best Shot" from his debut album *Mercury Lane* claimed – and then re-claimed – the top spot on the chart late last year. The Milton, DE native also made history as the first black artist to launch his career with a No. 1 at Country radio.

I went to CRS last year. It was awesome to meet new people and to watch and learn from other artists.

My first single was a ballad. When you come to my shows, I might sing two slow songs. Everything else is up. I'm jumping off stuff, doing flips. So I'm excited for radio to see what my show looks like.

I pack a lot for the road. I love clothes. When I'm going out for a weekend, it's eight or nine pairs of pants, six or seven pairs of boots and shoes, and six or seven jackets. Sometimes I change my shirt or jacket halfway through the set.

On radio tour I learned to always be yourself. People want to connect with authenticity. Focus on the people who like you and support what you're doing.

Last year was awesome. I had my first No. 1 and my *Grand Ole Opry* debut. I was on Steve Harvey's show and I was on *Today* a few times. I got to play my first stadium show and headline my first festival. I recorded a song for Montgomery Gentry's 20th anniversary album. But the highlight was getting home from radio tour in time to see my son's first soccer game. He looked at me and yelled, "Daddy!" And he ran off the field while he was playing and gave me a hug. I had a lot of great moments, like finding out I made CRS *New Faces*. But family comes first.

Being a father gave me perspective. Every decision I make affects my son. That's the reason I don't curse in my lyrics or onstage. Music is supposed to bring us together. I want my concerts to be something families can come to together. I don't ever want parents to worry about what I'm going to say from the stage.

I've always visualized this happening – I just didn't know when. For instance, my live shows and the props and lights onstage, I had that planned six years ago. I just had to wait for my opportunity. Now, I'm living out what was planned. I have a book coming out this year and while that's happening, I'll be writing a movie. By that time, hopefully I'll be on my third or fourth single. You have to have a plan.

As a person of color in country music, it's important to talk about it because there *are* younger black kids who want to get into the genre. They need to know from myself and other artists like Kane Brown, Mickey Guyton, Cowboy Troy, Tony Jackson, Darius Rucker and Charley Pride, that, "Hey, it's cool to be yourself, to do this."

Some of my favorite social media moments? When Rob Thomas started following me on Instagram. Also when Darius Rucker tweeted me "Good luck" before the *Opry*. But I definitely have my limits. I don't post about relationships. I'll post pictures of me and my son at a Disney thing, for example, but not when we have breakfast together or say our prayers. Some things need to be sacred.

My favorite Disney character is Goofy. Dude is insane. Goofy plays the room. If someone needs a laugh, Goofy comes in. If they need a serious thing, Goofy will drop some lines for people. He has the biggest heart.

For the folks coming to CRS, if you like hot chicken, try Hattie B's. If you like meat and threes, Arnold's Country Kitchen is amazing. Juice Bar is great. And I think Puckett's has the best barbecue.



Russell Dickerson

Dickerson's career launch packed a one-two punch, with singles "Yours" and "Blue Tacoma" both topping the charts. The Triple Tigers artist also recently kicked off a co-headlining tour with one of last year's New Faces, Carly Pearce.

The New Faces event has been a goal of mine, honestly, for so long. To be chosen is such a dream. I am honored.

I'm a social guy, so it is really cool to catch up with everybody at CRS, especially now that I can call these people friends. We know each other now. We have a bond. I'm always looking forward to the hang.

I like to have options on the road. I'm an over-packer – a little too much on the shoe side. You've got to have a boot option; you've got to have a sneaker option.

When I have a radio dinner, I'm the wine guy. As soon as we sit down, I've got the wine list. I get a little nerdy on the wine train and I love to get a nice bottle, make sure we've got a good region – maybe France or Napa Valley.

The main thing I've learned from doing a radio tour is to live in the moment. I'm always gone. So if I spent all day, every day, wishing I was home, wishing I could sleep in my own bed, I'd be wasting day after day. I finally got to a point where I was like, "This is the life I chose. I've got to learn to be happy right here, on this tour bus, and it's raining." Because here I am on tour, finally getting to live out my dream. I'm on a *tour bus*, for God's sake. I've learned to just be happy and grateful for right where you are.

If I could switch places with somebody at radio, I'd be on the air for sure. I would totally be the over-hyper on-air guy who would probably get fired within the first week for talking too much.

One thing about my job I'd like someone in radio to experience? Sing the last high note of "Yours." I would love to see that.

It was a huge moment when "Blue Tacoma" went No. 1. And then all of a sudden I realized, I just had two No. 1s in one year. It has been my goal for eight years to have one. But to have two in a row within six months of each other, holy cow. Here I am. It's crazy.

It's B.S. when they say nice guys finish last in this industry. People fight for the people who are the most humble and the kindest. That's what I've learned from Thomas Rhett, and that's what I've learned from my FGL buddies as well. If you take care of the people around you, your band and your crew and radio and your label, everybody is going to root for you.

When I posted about being on *Good Morning America* was a big social media moment for me. I was about to perform and they presented me with the "Yours" certified platinum plaque. Another favorite is, my

wife has this thing called "Coffee With Kailey," which started when she was trying to figure out how to use our coffee maker. And that turned into a

little series. Now fans make mugs that say "Coffee With Kailey," and she has her own meet and greets.

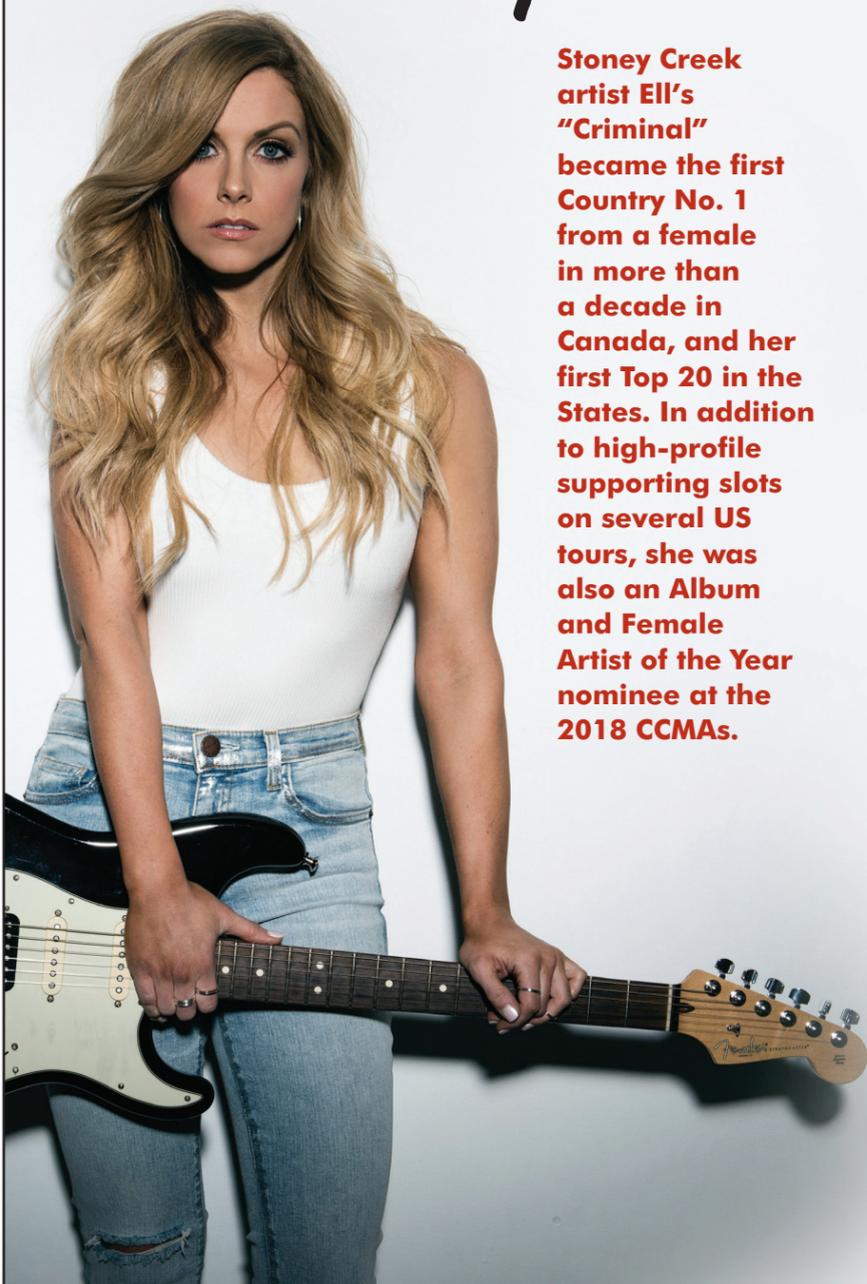
If you're coming to Nashville for CRS, one of my favorite restaurants is The Southern, right there across the street from the Omni. Another one is Moto. It has an upscale Italian kind of vibe. And then if you come in a day early and have time to visit the Jack Daniel's Distillery in Lynchburg, that's one of the coolest tours ever.

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Lindsay Ell

Stoney Creek artist Ell's "Criminal" became the first Country No. 1 from a female in more than a decade in Canada, and her first Top 20 in the States. In addition to high-profile supporting slots on several US tours, she was also an Album and Female Artist of the Year nominee at the 2018 CCMA's.



I screamed when I found out I was in the *New Faces* show. It's the industry saying, "We believe in you and in where you're going." It's a huge honor.

I've toured with some of my idols, including Brad Paisley, Keith Urban and Sugarland. My live show has changed for the better because I got to watch the greats do what they do every night.

I've become an expert packer. We were on the road more than 260 days last year. So now I can pack in under 10 minutes. When I lift my suitcase, I know if it's under 50 pounds or not.

If we're doing a station lunch or dinner, I'm pretty consistent. I order a salad with salmon, or salmon and vegetables. But when we're in bars ... I've now had enough chicken fingers for the rest of my life.

I remember being warned before my first radio tour that it was so hard. But I loved it. It was empowering. I felt like I was meeting 300+ new friends. Now when I talk to artists who are about to do one, I tell them, "Don't try to figure out where you're going. Just enjoy where you're at and live in the present."

It would be so cool to be a Program Director, to craft your station and create what people hear. And also to make those decisions on artists that you want to take a shot on, so people can discover new music.

If people in radio could do my job, it would be interesting to see how they handled the travel. Getting only three hours of sleep every night eventually takes its toll. Being onstage is my favorite few minutes of the day. But traveling is the "work" behind it. Being a woman in this business is a whole other factor. If they could wear five-inch stilettos and see how that feels after a four-hour event, I would love for men, especially, to experience that!

Getting to open the CMA Awards with Luke Bryan was a "pinch me" moment. The fact that Luke stood up for us and said, "These are people I believe in, this is the future of country music," was so cool. Another highlight was New Year's Eve in Nashville, when Keith Urban asked me to play "Horses" with him during his show.

The guitar doesn't lead the way of where I'm going as an artist, but it definitely shapes who I am. It's another tool I have. There are unfortunately not a lot of females playing lead instruments in country bands right now. But I'm happy I can lead that charge and grateful that it helps me become a unique artist.

Every picture I post from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital always gets lots of likes. I donate a portion of every t-shirt I sell to them. I believe in that hospital so much, and I love spending time with those kids.

The Instagram picture that got the most reaction this year was me hugging my first tour bus after so many miles in a minivan. I don't get proud of myself very often, but I'm proud that I have worked really hard and have been as frugal as I can to get to this moment.

If you're coming to Nashville for the first time you have to try hot chicken, like Hattie B's. A few of my other favorite restaurants are Rolf & Daughters and Sunda. And Jeni's Ice Cream is amazing.

RUSSELL DICKERSON

BACK-TO-BACK #1 SINGLES

"YOURS" PLATINUM "BLUE TACOMA" GOLD

417 MILLION ALBUM STREAMS

CRS NEW FACES

**THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO FOR
EVERY LITTLE THING IN 2018**

Lanco

ACM and CMA-nominated Lanco's Brandon Lancaster, Tripp Howell, Chandler Baldwin, Jared Hampton and Eric Steedly released their No. 1 debut album *Hallelujah Nights* on Arista in 2018. Also No. 1 – double platinum single "Greatest Love Story."

Brandon: CRS is a crazy week. To see all the people behind Country radio and all the work that goes into it is surreal.

Tripp: It's always a fun time. We're going to be playing music no one has ever heard. To be able to play something new for radio and fans is a big deal for us.

Brandon: We all have different strengths. Tripp and Chandler are both organized dudes. Chandler has this backpack with every compartment perfectly coded. We had bus call the other night at 1am, and I called Tripp at 10pm. He said, "Oh I just finished packing." I literally didn't start packing until 12:30 and was throwing everything from the dryer into my suitcase.

Tripp: At a station dinner, I know it sounds cliché, but I'll usually order a steak. Something I hope to never eat again? A Kangaroo hot dog. It was in Texas. It tasted so gamey.

Brandon: When we were on radio tour we played the jelly bean game BeanBoozled. There are good and bad flavors, like "moldy socks" and "skunk," but you don't

know until you eat it. One of our reps made us eat one for every minute we were late. Then it became a game we played on the air. After radio tour I said, "I don't care if I'm 80 hours late, there's no way I'm eating those again."

Tripp: One thing I've learned is to enjoy this journey. When we started, we were five guys working terrible jobs. On radio tour it was like, "You're telling me we get to go play music and we'll eat really nice dinners and *that's* the gig?"

Brandon: I've learned how important it is to invest in the people [in radio] who are investing in you. Just be good to people.

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Tripp: We were guest hosts for KKGO/Los Angeles. It was therapeutic to do that much talking, whether it was going down memory lane or talking about a current situation. I'm aware that [on-air hosts] do a lot more, but that part was awesome.

I wish *they* could be in the studio when we're recording and feel what it's like when everything clicks and you just "know."

Brandon: LakeShake was a big highlight, because we had played the side stage to just a few people years before. To be on the main stage and play to thousands – and not just sing *to* them but *with* them – that was a moment where you're like, "Alright, this is working."

Brandon: We try to be as transparent as possible on social media – but when we go into the studio, we leave our phones at the door. Sometimes we'll have a video guy who'll post stuff later. But you're trying to create music you're gonna live with for the rest of your life. And in the middle of doing that, you're suddenly scrolling down a timeline looking at your buddy from college and what he's doing in Florida. But we have had some cool moments that we posted, like a selfie with Post Malone when we hung out with him at Whiskey Row.

Tripp: We posted some videos from when Brandon, Jared and I flew back to Nashville with Dierks Bentley on his jet. He let us hop up front and drive the plane.

Tripp: If I were playing tour guide for people coming to CRS, I'd say go to Prince's Hot Chicken Shack. It's so good!

Brandon: I live in east Nashville, and there are some great places like Lockeland Table and Pearl Diver. And definitely hit up Robert's Western World downtown for old-school country music.



Dylan Scott

Curb's Scott went platinum with his single "My Girl" and gold with "Hooked." He's currently on a headlining tour and out with the title track from his upcoming EP, *Nothing To Do Town*.

I got goosebumps when I found out I was in the *New Faces* show. And I'm friends with all the other artists in the lineup. It's cool that we'll all get to share that moment together.

If my bus call is at midnight, I'm usually packing around 10:30pm. Which is not good, because my wife and son are asleep and I'm going through drawers trying to find stuff.

At a station dinner, I always try to find a good shrimp cocktail. Something I never want to eat again? I'm not a raw oysters kind of guy. Or a cooked oysters guy.

One lesson I learned on radio tour was to pay attention – to where you're going, what's going on, who you're meeting. Always pay attention.

If I could switch places with somebody in radio, I'd like to experience going to nice fancy dinners every night. That's probably fun. And every day, whether it's meeting big superstars or new artists, they get to meet a lot of really cool people. On my end, I'd love for them to experience what it's like to go onstage and feel the energy from the crowd when they're singing a song I wrote back to me.

I remember my first concert of 2018 in January, showing up expecting to be playing for 200 people – and it was actually a sold-out crowd of almost 2,000. And that was the trajectory all year long. We showed up and played sold-out or almost sold-out shows. That's when I knew, "Things are shifting here. It's getting really fun."

Being a father has made leaving home a lot harder. And before, I was the kind of guy who, when I wanted something, I wanted it right then. With having a kid, you learn patience.

My dad taught me that being in this business does not mean overnight success. [Scott's father, Scotty Robinson, played guitar for Freddie Hart and Freddy Fender.] When I was a kid, I didn't quite understand that. But he was exactly right. It takes time, it takes work, and people may think you've come out of nowhere, and oh you're making it. But we put in a lot of nights on the road and nights away from our families to do what we're doing.

My brother plays lead guitar in my band, and my drummer and bass player are brothers. Nobody fights, nobody bickers. We all know our lanes and if somebody did have an argument, we're brothers – and usually family gets over things really quick. I can wake up every day knowing I don't have to worry about anything because these guys are class acts.

I try to be an open book on social media. I post a lot of pictures of my wife, my kid and our life. Something funny that happened on social media was when I was touring with Justin Moore. I was onstage and, during the show, a girl had Facetimed her Marine boyfriend, who was lying in bed shirtless. At the time, it was funny to me, so I called him out to everybody and said, "Dude, why are you not wearing a shirt?"

My favorite place to eat in Nashville is Taco Mamacita. I'm a big queso junkie, and they have the best queso. They also have sloppy Jose tacos, like a Fritos pie in a taco.

I went to my first CRS in 2013. What was cool about it to me was there were so many people there all trying to make our jobs even better. And since then, I've made so many great relationships. It's an honor to be a New Face. **CAC**

