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## THE DROP

# The Drop: Exclusive Music Video Premiere For ZZ Ward's "Cannonball"

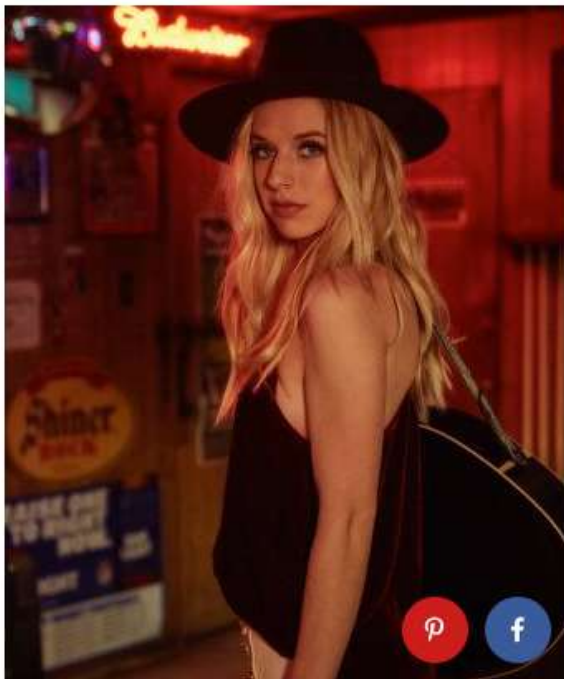


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Few voices will shake you quite as much as ZZ Ward's and, fortunately, she's back for more. The singer, whose debut studio album *Til The Casket Drops* first dropped in 2012, is back with her sophomore venture — one, she tells Refinery29, was made possible thanks to a deeper understanding of herself. [ZZ Ward's new album \*The Storm\*](#) dropped on June 30, and the singer (full name Zsuzsanna), is basking in the moment five years in the making.

*The Storm*, which features tracks like "If U Stayed" and "Ghost," has influences ranging from hip hop to blues to pop. "Cannonball," an exploration of longing, became [a collaboration with Fantastic Negrito](#), a blues singer who so excited Ward she called him up to guest on her

track. Now, the music video for "Cannonball" has arrived, and it's an extension of the song's fire. Speaking exclusively to Refinery29, Ward explains why she chose a black and white motif for the video, and what it was like being doused with freezing water for her art.

### **What inspired "Cannonball?"**

"Really it was that feeling of being too scared to walk away from someone because you don't want to feel the pain of not being with them. It's that thing where you keep turning around, and you feel better when you're with them, and you don't want to face that pain of not being with them so you keep hanging on. That's kind of where 'Cannonball' came from. Fantastic Negrito is on the song, and I am a big fan of Fantastic Negrito, and his amazing voice, and I wanted him to be on the album. I thought about where it would make sense, where his flavor would feel really good, and I thought it would be awesome on 'Cannonball.'"

### **How did the collaboration between you and Fantastic Negrito begin?**

"I reached out to him because I was listening to his music, and I loved what he was doing with the blues, like keeping the blues alive, and that's something that is really inspiring to me because I love blues music so much, and it's so important to me. I just really loved what he was doing with that, and his style was so unique. So I had been listening to his voice and I loved the texture of his voice, and so I really wanted to collab together. 'Cannonball' is a really blues song that I have... I called him up, and it ended up working out."

### ***The Storm* is your second studio album. Were there any big differences between releasing this album and your first, *Til The Casket Drops*?**

"Yeah, definitely. I knew who I was more on this album. My first album, I was figuring out who I was, and on this album, I knew who I was. I dove deeper into my influences, blues and hip hop, and kept it simple. I wanted to simplify my music, and really be confident in who I am and what my sound is at this point."

### **What is the proudest moment you've had in the last few years as a musician?**

"There are a lot of proud moments... My album came out [on June 30], and I feel really proud of it. It's hard to be patient when you're making a record, and remember why you're making it, and put your heart and soul in it and really be authentic in telling your story. That was the most important thing to me on this record, and I feel like I did that. I set out to do something that was true, and that was real, and I did it. I feel really good about that. I feel good about the songs on my album and the stories behind them."

### **Who are some of your favorite right now?**

"I love Alabama Shakes so much. I think Brittany [Howard] is incredible, and I love what she's doing with being her artist and having her own sound... Another artist I've become a big fan of is Marren Morris. I love Marren Morris, and I love her blues and country music, I love her record *Hero*, it's a record I can get excited about, which is so cool. It takes me back to like, Sheryl Crow or something, when I listen to Maren Morris. She has such a cool vibe, and is so badass."

### **Who came up with the theme of the video, and how did you select that particular vision?**

"I worked with a really amazing director, his name is Kyle [Cogan from Simian Design]. I worked with Kyle on two other videos, the 'Deep' video and the 'Help Me Mama' video. I had been browsing other videos while looking for [inspiration for] 'Cannonball,' and I saw myself being drawn towards black and white. It made me feel like it would represent the song well, and the coolness of the song. I wanted a lot of contrast. I wanted it to be moody, and reflect the story of the song, and the feeling of being somewhat helpless and trapped in the song."

"Kyle really wanted to bring rain into the video, which sounded better than it felt. It looks amazing, but when we actually filmed me in the rain, it was 1 a.m., it was freezing, and the water was like hose water so it was freezing. I had to do one take where I was being rained on and playing harmonica, and it was, it was a moment. It was so funny, once I got into it, once I was in character and singing it, I was *into* it. I was like 'I am going to get this take all the way through, I can't break!' And it was really cold."

### **Why choose a warehouse setting for the video?**

"I think it's just about being lost in a space, and having this big empty room. You feel a little small... In this relationship, you feel small. Someone is taking advantage of you and making you feel small... The warehouse reflected that underlying feeling."

**I loved your outfit and makeup in the video. The song is so moody, but your wardrobe choice is so fun. Why go this route?**

"I have a really incredible stylist, and we had a couple different outfit options. The outfit I ended up picking out were these [Topshop] pants, and they're a teal color... When I was looking at the two outfit options, I just thought that, you know, that reflection [from the pants,] would look cool and different, almost like a mirror image in this black and white [video.] I decided to go with the pants and it added a nice interesting depth to [the video.] [My makeup artist], he thought, 'Why don't we do a metallic glitter on your lid, to kind of resemble the same feeling as the pants.' That's kind of how it came together."

**What advice would you give young artists hoping to make it as a singer-songwriter?**

"It's really important to have your own voice and have your own style, and sometimes you might not know what that is, but the best way to start to get there and start to develop that, is to write your own music... Even if you don't know what you're doing, that's perfect. Start writing a song, pick up the guitar, pick up the piano. Pick up an instrument, and start thinking about what you want to talk about and how to express yourself, because having your own voice is everything, and it's so important."

Watch the new video below:

