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## THE DROP

# ZZ Ward Found Her Inspiration For The “Sex & Stardust” Video In *Kill Bill*



*Welcome to [The Drop](#), Refinery29's new home for exclusive music video premieres. We want to shine the spotlight on women artists whose music inspires, excites, and (literally) moves us. This is where we'll champion their voices.*

Zsuzsanna Eva Ward, known to her fans as ZZ, has one of the [strongest voices in the music game](#). It's raw and muscular, with an old time blues feel to it, while still coming across as feminine and modern. But she's [much more than just a voice](#) — she's a songwriter, composer, pianist, guitarist, and will blow your mind when she gets going on the harmonica. But these are things anyone who presses play on her catalog can figure out about Ward. With her latest single, "Sex & Stardust," Ward wanted to show a different side of herself.

Ward wrote the video's treatment, taking inspiration from the [legendary film director Quentin Tarantino](#), and cast herself as the kick ass leading lady. It was a role she needed to take on, in some ways, to get through a music project that was inspired by a relationship gone wrong — heartbreak, betrayal, and devastation are all words she uses to describe it. But playing this character brought her back to the empowered woman she is at her core.

Ahead, Ward talks to Refinery29 about really going into an emotion when she writes songs, doing her first stunt work in this video, and how to write a good twist ending.

**Refinery29: Where did the idea for this song start?**

ZZ Ward: "First, I came up with the chord progression to the song. I liked how it felt, it felt like I had heard it before but I hadn't and I think, as a songwriter, that's something you want to find. It should feel familiar enough but unique. It was giving me Screamin' Jay Hawkins vibes. Then, I had to figure out what that feeling was making me want to express. It made me feel sexy and mysterious. What I ended up writing it about was being in a relationship with someone and being completely under their spell. Sometimes we meet people in our lives who bring something out of us that maybe we didn't know was in us [laughs], or things we didn't know we were capable of. You really don't know, sometimes you'll meet someone who you're all about and that's what this song was written about — being under someone's spell."

**Where did you shoot the video? What was the concept?**

"We shot it at the Snow White Drive-In, a diner in Lebanon, TN, which is right outside of Nashville. The concept came from wanting to do something different. I've done a lot of videos where I'm just singing or playing. I wanted to explore capturing an environment and the story in those three minutes. I didn't know how it was going to turn out, this was something new for me. I've always been inspired by Quentin Tarantino. I've felt empowered at times watching his films, like Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill* and *Natural Born Killers*. It's an over the top, almost offensive way of making things larger than life. I think that's what I do in my songwriting a lot. I didn't want the video to be super straight forward, so it has that twist that makes you ask who are the good guys and who are the bad guys?"

**Not everyone could keep a straight face playing your part in this video. How did you do it?**

"I've never done that in a video before and it was outside my comfort zone. I wanted to get into an exaggerated place where I could turn the feeling I had into a character. For me, being in the diner at that moment would mean being in a situation and not caring at all what the people around me are thinking because I'm so entranced by this person. It came across in almost a sarcastic way, but it is funny because you can't force that. I'm assuming that's what [Thurman and John Travolta] were doing in *Pulp Fiction* too, that they were so into their characters and the moment, but it's so ironic how it came across."

**What other firsts did you experience on the set?**

"I had never worked with stunt performers before. The robbers were stunt people who had been in *The Walking Dead*. I wrote the video treatment and was super excited about it, but I didn't know how it was going to be executed. I wasn't expecting that! After the dance when I hit the robber with the seeing eye cane, he had a plate on his chest but I didn't know it. The stunt coordinator told me to hit him as hard as I could — but had me feel his chest first. He told me to just not hit him above or below a certain line. No pressure! I played softball in school — I was not very good, but I guess having some experience helped me not hit him below that line. I had to do that drop in the dance, pick up the cane, and smack him in the chest. "The girl whose head I smash in the french fries, there are bloopers of my smashing her head and then being like, *oh my god are you okay?* They're trained, if you hit them their reactions make you seem cool — they overreact to it. I barely grabbed her head and smashed it in the fries, she did all the work, but I was like, *Woah did I do that?*"