



DANDIEGO RECORD OF THE MONTH



March 2026

Faithful Followers,

March is a little bit different than the other 11 months of the year for me. At least in terms of how much music I listen to. By this time, my Spotify Top Tracks from the prior calendar year has started to go sour. Festival season is beginning, so there is a drop off in new music releases. But most importantly college basketball takes complete control of my life. I'm not even gambling this year. But from Conference Tournament Week (that's where you can make some *real* money) until now (April 6th – National Championship Day), my recreational media indulgence is dominated by whatever game is on. They're on most of the day, most days for a couple of weeks, so I do tend to lose my grip on music a bit in this period. That said – I think that sometimes a step back from something can be refreshing, and allow you to see something that was perhaps getting a bit tired with new life. So with that being said, this month we're going to look at an album from a band based on something similar.

Before we begin and while I'm still on college basketball, I did want to follow up and acknowledge that the Miami Redhawks completed a feat only 6 other Division One teams have completed in the modern era, and finished their regular season undefeated – a perfect 31-0. After finishing the season with no blemish on their record, they promptly lost as a 1 seed in the first round of the MAC Tournament, eliminating themselves from the conference champion seat in the National Tournament. They did however, upset in a First Round Play-In game against SMU. A matchup in which the Redhawks were 6.5 point underdogs, they dominated the Dayton Arena, defeating SMU 89-79. A great win to watch, and an exclamation point on a wonderful season. Ultimately, this lead to a matchup with SEC dark horse Tennessee in which we got our fundamental buns handed to us. But again, a wonderful accomplishment that will monument them in history.

Ok, so I didn't know what album I was going to do this month until I wrote that first paragraph 6 days into April. Sorry.... I actually wrote out a different one yesterday that I may perhaps use sometime down the line. But today we are exploring **State Radio: Us Against the Crown**. State Radio is a band that was formed after the well known band *Dispatch* broke up. State Radio feature's Dispatch's lead singer – Chad Urmston. This is an Album that I absolutely LOVE. I've had a specific relationship with each and every track at some point in time. It is similar to Third Eye Blind's self titled debut album, and New Found Glory's *Sticks and Stone* in that sense. Kind of like when a random NBA player completes a rare and complex stat that puts them in a category with only Michael Jordan and Kobe. When I discovered this band, I had also just recently discovered Dispatch – which meant that I also discovered that Dispatch had broken up. I didn't know about State Radio yet, and I was like really into Dispatch, and kind of entering my first hippie stage as a high school senior. I did actually get my hair braided in an attempt to grow dreadlocks that summer. Yup.....

So there I was – singing Flying Horses and Elias in a state of pure bliss, only to find out the band broke up. I was super pissed. But then my friend Pat Tracey (anyone know where he's at these



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days?) told me about this band. I bought the album on Apple iTunes, and on my iPod Video it shot up the charts instantly.

Dispatch is pretty Folk oriented with a decent kick of Reggae. State Radio features a little bit more of the Reggae sound, but still leans pretty heavily on Folk – in sound and ideology. With an album title like *Us Against the Crown*, it's not much of a surprise that most of these tracks have a rebellious undertone to them, specifically in protest of the Iraq War. Each song tells it's own story, and has kind of a livewire jive that gets you up and bouncing. The biggest hit and single on the album is *Right Me Up*. This song is about someone the band had come to know named Manny. Manny is disabled and bound to a wheelchair. The song aims to personify Manny's good attitude despite the physical limitations he encounters every day. *Mr. Larkin* is a catchy rock ballad of sorts, that describes one loving husband's devotion to his aging and mentally deteriorating wife. He documents the mans journey by bus to the care facility in which she resides, works the kitchen and any overtime he can to pay for her residency, and spends any free time he has with her, trying to convince someone that can hardly remember who he is of the many golden years they once shared. A joyfully heartbreaking story of true love. Then you've got *Waitress and Diner Song*, which are fun, impromptu sounding and non-traditionally formatted jams tracks recounting several speculative lewd acts in a place of business. *Camilo* is one of the anti-war tracks, and has a real ballad type ring to it, specifically the late bridge.

State Radio has actually made a lot of music after releasing this (their debut) album. That said, I personally find this to be their best by far. An album with strong themes of freedom should sound like one – and State Radio accomplishes that in *Us Against the Crown*.

Definitely give this one a listen. You won't be disappointed, and you may even be inspired. Until next time,

Keep it Surreal,

Dan Diego



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Past ROTMs:

November 2023: Desire, I Want to Turn Into You – Caroline Polachek

December 2023: Depression Cherry – Beach House

January 2024: MTV Unplugged Live from New York – Nirvana

February 2024: Actual Life 2 – Fred Again..

March 2024: Music from the LOTR Trilogy – The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra

April 2024: Greatest Hits: Volume 1 – James Taylor

May 2024: Hybrid Theory – Linkin Park

June 2024: Ursa Major – Third Eye Blind

July 2024: Live 1997 – Daft Punk

August 2024: White Ladder, Live in Austin – David Gray

September 2024: Tidal – Fiona Apple

October 2024: Kid A – Radiohead

November 2024: Alive 2007 – Daft Punk

December 2024: Ten – Pearl Jam

January 2025: Balloonerism – Mac Miller

February 2025: Ceremonials – Florence + The Machine

March 2025: Narrow Stairs – Death Cab for Cutie

April 2025: Pang – Caroline Polachek

May 2025: 4:44 – Jay-Z

June 2025: Third Eye Blind – Third Eye Blind

July 2025: Live from Joshua Tree – Rufus Du Sol

August 2025: Magic – Bruce Springsteen



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September 2025: Push the Button – The Chemical Brothers

October 2025: Mac Miller – NPR Tiny Desk

November 2025: LEAVE OF ABSENCE

December 2025: Your Top Songs 2025 – DanDieg0

January 2026: This Is All Yours – alt-J

February 2026: Sticks and Stones – New Found Glory

March 2026: Us Against the Crown – State Radio