

Media Release

**BAND OF HORSES ANNOUNCE NEW ALBUM  
*THINGS ARE GREAT* OUT JANUARY 21ST**

**NEW SONG “[CRUTCH](#)” OUT TODAY**



(Photo Credit: Stevie and Sarah Gee, [download](#) hi-res)

(October 12, 2021 – Toronto, ON) Today, Band of Horses are announcing their sixth studio album and their first record in more than five years, *Things Are Great* which will be released January 21, 2022 via BMG. Sonically the album is a return to their earlier work and the kind of raw ethos that lies at the heart of Band of Horses. The album is available for pre-order [HERE](#).

“Crutch”, the first single from the album is out today and an unguarded first look at what fans can expect. With as much symbolic iconography as a Frida Kahlo lithograph, “Crutch” is a gorgeous, guitar-driven masterpiece which captures exactly why they are still one of the most important bands of their generation. Listen to “Crutch” [HERE](#) (single artwork [HERE](#)).



**Click image above or follow this link to view the official video for “Crutch”:**

<https://youtu.be/cCzPIrvIGXs>

Band founder Ben Bridwell tells us, *“I think like a lot of my songs, ‘Crutch’ starts with something from my real life. Obviously ‘Crutch’ means some of the things that I was dependent on. My relationship for one. I think I wanted to say, ‘I’ve got a crush on you,’ and I thought it was funny how relationships also feel like crutches. I feel like everybody has had a time when nothing goes right and you still have to carry on. I think that feeling hits you in this song even if you don’t know what the specifics are.”*

This time around Bridwell took a bigger role in production than he ever has previously, producing or co-producing every song on the album. He brought in old collaborators including Granddaddy’s Jason Lytle, Dave Fridmann, and Dave Sardy, but it’s not just old friends who were able to help Bridwell achieve the sound he envisioned. For the first time he worked with engineer Wolfgang “Wolfie” Zimmerman. The two had an instant connection which can be felt throughout the record.

Emotionally intense, both on a personal and elemental level, the songs for the most part were written before the world shut down, when all of us were faced with our own mortality and began to take stock of our lives. Here we find Bridwell more autobiographical than he’s ever been on record detailing the nebulous frustrations and quiet indignities of relationship changes and what a person will do to make things right. And what you do when you can’t.

Band of Horses have been making their mark on the festival circuit this summer, playing Lollapalooza, Firefly and Austin City Limits this last weekend. They go straight into 3 nights of intimate shows at Brooklyn Made starting October 18th before continuing their U.S fall tour. All tour dates are listed [HERE](#).



([download](#) album art)

### ***Things Are Great* Tracklisting**

01. Warning Signs
02. Crutch
03. Tragedy of the Commons
04. In The Hard Times
05. In Need of Repair
06. Aftermath
07. Lights
08. Ice Night We're Having
09. You Are Nice To Me
10. Coalinga

There might be no other band that was able to channel the generational anxiety of 20-somethings in those early millennial years and turn it into such powerful and inclusive art. Band of Horses fashioned gorgeously ragged epics, Ben Bridwell's high-flying vocals and eccentric enunciation floating like a specter over sweeping soundscapes that felt like prelude to a dream. The songs always veered between two points: dark and light, strength and vulnerability, apathy and devotion, hope and despair, but hope always nosed a little ahead.

Band founder Bridwell is a keen and enthusiastic storyteller, but also a relentless observer of the quirks and vagaries of the human heart and the peculiar beauty of dysfunction. He possesses the heightened sensitivity of a hyper-aware soul, ever-watchful and wary that there might be a pothole, a pitfall or a monster under the bed, always a little suspicious of happiness and human

connection. Full of profundity, truth and sometimes just homespun advice of how to live, Band of Horses songs have become anthems, mantras and touchstones for fans.

"I'm not sure about that," Bridwell says from his front porch outside of Charleston, South Carolina, his rambunctious dog Lucille gamboling around the yard and causing a racket. "It's always a bit overwhelming to hear about the role you play in people's lives, and how the songs resonate with some of their big moments, like when they fall in love, or lose that love, or just lose someone close to them. But really, I think the thing that connects all the Band of Horses albums is I'm always complaining about something," he laughs self-effacingly.

Complaining doesn't even begin to describe what Bridwell does. He is as much a way-shower and prophet as he is a musician, uncannily seeming to spot menace, discord and psychic distress before the rest of us. He sounds the alarm in his songs, cloaking peril in swooping guitars and layered, deceptively fragile sounds. His vocals -- wistful, plaintive, ethereal -- attempt to belie the apprehension in the lyrics, which possess a crucial degree of universality: They're never so specific or personal that listeners can't project themselves into the words and make them their own.

Unease bled into the songs, beginning with the anxious chiming guitar on album-opener "Warning Signs" -- a song inspired by an incident in 2016, when Bridwell lost his voice onstage at the Sydney Opera House, bringing him to tears in front of the Australian audience. But anyone who listened closely to the group's 2016 album, *Why Are You OK*, sensed a hint of discontent and chill in the rarified South Carolina air in the place that the singer liked to call "Happyville." *Why Are You OK* seemed to anticipate some of the themes that appear on *Things Are Great*, especially apparent on *OK*'s "Casual Party" and album-closer "Even Still," with its foreboding last lines, "But I could just leave/I could just leave, oh." "I think that's where our rebirth began. We hinted at it the last album while we still had the other lineup," Bridwell begins, stopping to gather his thoughts. "Well, there were things that were just not working, but I wasn't sure exactly what back then ... " he trails off.

But time and reflection helped him figure it out. Bridwell changed the Band of Horses lineup— Tyler Ramsey and Bill Reynolds departed in May 2017 --to recapture some of the raw emotion and unpolished punk-rock spirit of the days when they were inventing themselves from the remains of the sad, sprawling orchestral-pop band Carissa's Wierd. Except for drummer Sera Cahoone, most of the members of that Seattle band were self-taught. "When I started, I was a crappy drummer in a slow-core band that broke up because it wasn't going nowhere," Bridwell says. "All of a sudden I had to figure out how to do guitar stuff [for this band]. I put my hands where they're comfortable, my fingers on the fretboard and detune the strings to make it comfortable for the shapes. I didn't have to learn all these goddam fucking chords. Now I'm stuck with all these weird tunings that don't make sense to anyone else. It's kinda hilarious showing them to accomplished players or guitar techs. It's hard for them to play much of anything in those tunings," laughs Bridwell.

"I was fucking around figuring things out as I went along, but looking back I realize the way I played guitar was the main identity of the band." Drummer Creighton Barrett echoed that sentiment in an interview with Relix. "When we first started touring, we had to have a guitar tech immediately because we had to travel with 12 guitars that had to stay in their tunings. Ben didn't know how to tune a guitar, so all those songs are written in those weird tunings. So they dictated choruses and verses." But back then, Bridwell was self-conscious about his lack of ability, and he kept hiring name producers and drafting crack musicians into the lineup. "Early on I thought we

needed better players -- and don't forget there's so many ex-members of this band," Bridwell admits. "Like it ain't just Bill and Tyler who I asked to leave. If you look on Wikipedia it'll show you there's over 10 that are gone. So it's a constant evolving lineup." He hesitates, then in a rush of words says, "I hope people just don't think that is me being ruthless. I'm still friends with almost everybody who has ever been in the band." "It's no slight on Tyler [Ramsey] and Bill [Reynolds], because they're good. Almost too good. Creighton and I and even Ryan [Monroe, keyboards] have all been in the band since almost the beginning. [But after the last album] we all felt kind of a bit listless. We were in this professional recording band thing at this expensive studio -- like a time-is-money thing -- and it just wasn't working for me." He knew it for sure when he began to sneak out to record demos of what he was working on with a young engineer named Wolfgang "Wolfie" Zimmerman, not telling anyone in the band about what he was doing.

That was when he did some serious thinking about Band of Horses and what needed changing. Shortly afterward, he asked Ramsey and Reynolds to leave. It was also when Bridwell realized he needed to exert some control on the production, and along with Zimmerman, he produced or co-produced all of the tracks, with help from Granddaddy's Jason Lytle and Flaming Lips producer Dave Fridmann. "I don't consider deciding to produce [the record] a rebellion, but a recapturing of our own -- and my own -- spirit, honestly," the musician explains.

Band of Horses is now composed of Bridwell, longtime members Monroe and Barrett, Archers of Loaf bassist Matt Gentling (who was in Band of Horses' touring band in 2007 and appeared on a track on *Why Are You OK*) and guitarist Ian MacDougall, Broken Golden front man, and until 2017, the Band of Horses merch manager. "I was convinced by Creighton and Bryan, our tour manager. They told me, 'Ian can play, man, he's kind of a fucking stud when it comes to guitar. And so I listened to their advice, and I'm glad I did. Because if anything, this album is a return to just us. It's just fucking us.'"

Some of the songs on *Things Are Great* document that change in members, as well as other connections in Bridwell's life that shifted, or remained. "This album tells a story of relationships. Personal relationships, my relationship. But I don't want to single anyone out," he says quietly. "It even shows the story of musical relationships changing. There are new relationships, like the one I have with Wolfie [Zimmerman], who was my creative conscience at times. There's also relationships that have endured as well as ones that are ending. That's important. The ones with Matt or Ryan and Creighton. Or the people who come back in my life, like Dave Sardy, who mixed *Infinite Arms*, and mixed this album; and Jason Lytle, who produced *Why Are You OK* and is back again. There's a lot of lasting relationships that I think tell a part of the story as well. "But what this album really is, is the evolution of where the fuck we're at at this point in our lives, personally and collectively, and it tells the stories hopefully from all sides, not just his or hers but the truth."

The truth is never really uncovered, but that makes it more interesting. The songs -- like life -- pose more questions than answers: blurry snapshots of scenes from a marriage, a band, fleeting connections, long-term friendships and other sorts of attachments that humans make, even with journalists. The album's last song, "Coalinga," is about a road trip Band of Horses took with writer Pat McGuire and photographer Brantley Gutierrez through the Central California coast for the cover of *Filter* magazine in 2007. It details the quirky, colorful mishaps they experienced together in a town whose "claim to fame" is smelling like cow excrement. The story resulted in an enduring friendship with McGuire and Gutierrez, who contributed music and play guitar on the track. A line in the original *Filter* article provided the album title.

Before that adventure, a powerful suite of songs takes the listener on a journey into and out of pain. At times you feel like you're following a sleepwalker fumbling through the five stages of grief, finally awakening and arriving, if not at acceptance, then at some sort of brave Deliverance.

An epic album, *Things Are Great* is not an exercise in nostalgia or regret. It's closer to the classic pattern of the hero's journey, one where Bridwell doesn't locate those elusive answers but does find himself in the end, providing hope that all of us can do the same.

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