

At the bottom of the Southwest Virginia foothills half-a-mile from the nearest neighbor, 21-year-old Colby T. Helms resides in an “underground house” built by his late father on land his family has owned for generations. Colby first dreamed of making music his life at age 12, when a group of Blue Ridge Mountain old-time and bluegrass players performed songs like The Ozark Mountain Daredevils’ “Standing On The Rock” and the gospel classic “A Beautiful Life” at his father’s funeral in Boones Mill, VA. To make his dream a reality, he taught himself guitar, banjo, and mandolin by watching local performers and YouTube videos. On the day he turned 16, he bought his first car, a stick-shift Jeep Wrangler, and hit the road to play anywhere people would have him. A veteran performer in the Blue Ridge/Appalachian Mountains region by age 18, Colby wrote the songs that would become his upcoming semi-autobiographical concept album, ‘Tales of Misfortune’, as a senior in high school. The album delves into the beginning of his story - starting off as a dream and ending with the passing and remembrance of his father. “Higher Ground” is about the choices he has made to realize his dream of becoming a touring musician - and their cost. “Mountain Brandy” brings the listener back to Colby’s home at the bottom of the Blue Ridge Mountains and sets the tone for the rest of the album. “Smoke and Flames” chronicles his experience as a fledgling musician, honing his craft and searching for validation while still in high school. Album closer “Daddy’s Pocket Knife” cuts the deepest. A true story that also serves as a metaphor for Colby’s own artistic journey, it reminds us that some things lost can be found. Colby T. Helms will release his debut album on Photo Finish Records in January 2024. He is managed by Dolphus Ramseur and booked by Paul Lohr and John Everhart of New Frontier Touring.