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## **Episode Title: Madeline Edwards's Big Moment**

**Episode Summary:** For the final episode of the Summer Tour edition of Biscuits and Jam, Sid Evans, Editor-in-Chief of Southern Living Magazine, welcomes singer/songwriter, Madeline Edwards. Today, Madeline talks about what finally made her take the leap and move to Nashville, and how she went from no prospects to performing with Mickey Guyton at the CMAs and touring with Chris Stapleton. Plus, she shares how her cocktail skills have made her some new friends on the road, and her secret to making the perfect ranch water.

## **Episode Transcript:**

### **(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins)**

**Sid Voice Over:** Welcome to the last episode of the Summer Tour edition of Biscuits and Jam, from Southern Living. I'm Sid Evans, editor-in-chief of Southern Living Magazine. We're going to have a whole new slate of episodes starting later this month, but I can't think of a better way to wrap up the summer than a conversation with one of the most talented singer/songwriters in Nashville.

Madeline Edwards grew up in a large musical family that moved from Santa Barbara, California to Houston, Texas when she was in High School. The move would have a huge impact not only on her life, but also on her music. Her sound combines influences of country, jazz, soul, and rock, and is sometimes reminiscent of her musical heroes Ella Fitzgerald and Shania Twain. Today, Madeline talks about what finally made her take the leap to move to Nashville, and how she went from no prospects to performing with Mickey Guyton at the CMAs and touring with Chris Stapleton. Plus, she shares how her cocktail skills have made her some new friends on the road, and her secret to making the perfect ranch water. All that and more this week on the final Summer Tour edition of Biscuits & Jam.

**Sid Evans:** Madeline Edwards, welcome to Biscuits and Jam.

**Madeline Edwards:** Thank you for having me. This is so exciting.

**Sid Evans:** So you were born in Santa Barbara, California, is that right?

**Madeline Edwards:** I was.

**Sid Evans:** But you spent your high school years in Houston, Texas, which had to be a very interesting transition.

**Madeline Edwards:** It was an interesting transition, mostly because anytime you move during that period in general, when you're in high school, when you're a teenager, you're going through puberty, you're having hormone changes, but then all of a sudden you're moving from California to Texas, which are two very different states geographically, politically, all of that, it was a big transition. And I think

that's kind of when I dove into music a lot harder than I ever had before, because initially when my mom put me in piano, when I was four years old, I didn't care about playing piano and I hated it. And then once I started figuring out oh, I could write music and process all of my feelings this way, and process my hatred towards my parents and the angst of like high school, and all this stuff, then I started kind of pouring into it a little bit more.

**Sid Evans:** Yeah. Wow. So it really helped you kind of get through that transition.

**Madeline Edwards:** It did, for sure. It was a huge part of my growing up and learning how to be, not only a teenager, but an adult, and figure out how to process and negotiate, and compile all of my emotions and feelings, and learn how to express them in a healthy, productive way, I think.

**Sid Evans:** So what was the story behind that move? I mean, you pick up and you're moving from this beautiful beach town, you're right on the ocean, moving to this huge city of Houston. Why did your folks make that move?

**Madeline Edwards:** I'm the oldest of family of seven. So it was both my parents, and then me and my four siblings. So there's me and my sister, and then three brothers. And it's a very expensive place to live when you have a family of that size. And so Texas was a very affordable option at the time. All of us were doing music, all of us were playing sports, and to do all of those activities in California, there wasn't a whole lot of opportunity for us to do those types of things there, but also it was very expensive. And so my family, I know they were looking at different options of what would be an affordable place for us to move all of these kids and do it in a successful, cost effective way. And so I think my dad had gone to Houston for some sort of business convention or something like that, and saw how affordable it was to live out there. And also Texas is so inviting and welcoming. It has all of that Southern charm of like, "I will take you in no matter where you're from." So yeah, we definitely had this appeal to go there and we kind of felt like we fit in a little bit. So that was kind of the reason for the move.

**Sid Evans:** So tell me a little bit about the home and the neighborhood that you grew up in Texas, or where you lived in Texas.

**Madeline Edwards:** So we lived in a very suburban area of Houston. There was a bunch of sports going on in that town. I was very involved. My brother played baseball. I played competitive tennis. Sports were very much like they made your identity a little bit where we were in Houston. It was just very suburban. It was kind of a cool area to grow up because there were a lot of kids where we were, not as many kids as there was in Santa Barbara. Obviously, there weren't a whole lot of kids in Santa Barbara for us to play with, but we got to kind of build our community around these kids that we played sports with, these kids that we did music with, people that we went to high school with, different things like that. And so it was cool because you got... We grew up in Atascocita, which is kind of between Humble and Kingwood. It's the suburban area in Houston. And there was parts of it where there was like total countryside. And then we lived near our lake, so we had a lot of time near the lake. And then you have, 45 minutes away, you have downtown Houston, which is very modern and the architecture in Houston is just constantly progressing. And it's amazing. So you have this really cool mix of everything, of all this country and rural areas, but also all of this tech and oil industry kind of infiltrating in the Houston metropolitan area. So I feel like me and my siblings grew up around a lot of everything. We grew up in

two completely different political climates. We grew up in two completely different geographical architecture. Everything. How people are, how they raise their families, everything like that, in two completely different areas. And so I feel like me and my family grew up with a very unbiased opinion towards everything. We kind of are middle ground when it comes to a lot of things, but it was cool to grow up that way. Because I feel like we got a lot of different viewpoints, and it helped us create a really full circle opinion of how we see life and how we see people. And I feel like you can hear a lot of that in my songwriting.

**Sid Evans:** I mean it is such an interesting city and it's got so much going on, and it's so progressive in so many ways, and it has been for a long time. And you've really got just such a melting pot of all different types of people. It just seems like a very interesting place to grow up.

**Madeline Edwards:** It's amazing. I mean, I miss Houston constantly. I talk about it in my music. I talk about it in interviews like this one. Houston, as much as I think people would like to think Texas leans one way more than another, it's actually very down the middle because there's a lot of culture in Houston. We had a lot of people that were from Nigeria that went to my high school. We had a lot of people that were from India that were at my high school. So I grew up in a very diverse friend group in Houston because we had friends from all parts of the world, and that's why Houston's considered a quote unquote port city, which is where that song that I wrote, Port City, came from. There's such an influx of different cultures and different nationalities in that city, that it felt very at home for me. It never felt like there was just a ton of white people or whatever. It didn't ever feel like that. The diversity in Houston was a strong aspect of why I loved it so much. And so I really do miss it a lot.

**Sid Evans:** Well, and it's also such a food town, and I love to talk about food on this podcast. You grew up in this large family. There were a lot of mouths to feed. Talk to me about food at home. I mean, who was the cook in your family?

**Madeline Edwards:** Yeah, not to get like too personal about it, but my dad was actually the cook in our family. I mean, you can hear this in my music. My brother is also a musician and an artist out of Houston, and he talks about this a lot in his music too. But we grew up in a very abusive household with our dad and he's actually not in our lives anymore. We haven't seen or heard from him in a very long time, and it's for the better, but he was actually the cook in our family and he was a very good cook. He grew up in the restaurant industry. He was very involved in the restaurant industry. So he knew how to mix flavors and seasonings, and different type of proteins, with all of this experimental food. And I resented cooking for a very long time because he was the cook in our family. And I couldn't associate cooking with anything other than this parental figure that we just had a lot of trauma from. And so it wasn't until I got married a year and a half ago, and COVID hit, and restaurants shut down, and it kind of forces you to make things yourself and to experiment with your own kinds of food, experiment with drinks and recipes, and things like that, that I kind of came to figure out that I'm actually a really good cook and I love cooking. I love having people over and cooking for them, and loving on them in that way. And I kind of found a way to separate that from, just because I'm a good cook or just because I love this, it doesn't make me my father. It's an expression of who I am, and this is how I'm able to serve people and love people well. And so I don't have to associate it with that part of my past. To accept it as a really good thing in my life.

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**Sid Evans:** Well, so tell me about that a little bit. I mean, what are some things that you really love to make? I mean, do you have a real connection with Texas when it comes to food or is it more sort of international, or what's your interest?

**Madeline Edwards:** It is kind of a connection to Texas. I will say I have a huge passion for cocktail making.

**Sid Evans:** Oh.

**Madeline Edwards:** It's something that I kind of picked up during COVID. I'm a massive fan of tequila and any type of mescal, but really any type of liquor, I will find some way to make a drink out of it or a cocktail. But I started diving into cocktail recipe books and different types of liquors, and how they pair well with other foods. And I kind of started taking on this hobby of making these craft cocktails during COVID. And it's something that I do to this day. I'll even bring my cocktail kit with my shaker and my little stirring spoon and everything. I'll bring it on the road with me so that I can serve drinks to my band, or The Stapletons camp, or Elle King, or whatever that looks like. But in terms of food, I really love anything that is Mexican food. I love making fajitas. I love making tacos, any type of Southwestern food. I have a really, really good shrimp and bacon fettuccine Alfredo that I make. So it is kind of rooted in Texas, but I kind of just find my little specialty dishes and stick with those.

**Sid Evans:** Those cocktails probably make you pretty popular backstage on the road.

**Madeline Edwards:** It has sparked a very amazing and unconventional relationship with Elle King. I remember, actually, I was terrified when I first met her, because she's such a big personality and I love it so much, so you're just like, "Oh, I don't know how to approach this. How do I come up to her? How do I say hi?" And then one time I just was like, you know what, "I'm just going to go bring her a margarita." So I made her a true Texas style margarita and I brought it to her dressing room and we've been friends ever since.

**Sid Evans:** I love that. I love that. So Madeline, what about grandparents? Did you have grandparents that you were close to?

**Madeline Edwards:** I did. So my grandparents actually lived in Fresno, which is about two or three hours from Santa Barbara, but those were my mom's side. And back in those years, Fresno was a huge farming community. There wasn't a whole lot there yet, and we definitely got immersed in the country culture of rodeo town, farming, country music, all of that kind of stuff, when we would go up to see my grandparents in Fresno.

**Sid Evans:** So you had a taste of that, so it wasn't that foreign to you when you moved to Houston?

**Madeline Edwards:** No, it wasn't. We really did have a taste of that because of our traveling back and forth between Santa Barbara and Fresno. We were kind of already exposed to that a little bit.

**Sid Evans:** Well, I want to talk about music for a second. And you grew up with all these brothers and sisters and you said a number of them are musical. What were you exposed to as a kid? What got you excited musically?

**Madeline Edwards:** I loved jazz when we were younger. We were kind of... Sheltered isn't the right word. We were very much in our own world, because when we were in Santa Barbara, we would go in between homeschooling and private school and different things like that. Our whole world was kind of like me and my siblings and the music that we listened to and the movies that we would watch, and so we were very exposed to older stuff like Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis. We would watch Turner Classic Movies every single day. I mean, we just had it on playing in the background. We never were really exposed to modern things. I'm pretty sure that Britney Spears was popular when I was younger, but I can't remember because I was never interested in that stuff. My mom was very much about, she wanted us to listen to jazz. She wanted us to listen to classical. She wanted us to listen to old Country Western music. And I don't know if that was because she didn't like the music that was modern during that time, or if it was more of a, I want them to be exposed to the best first. But we were kind of weirdos when we were little kids. I mean, we had a record player and we would go search for old records in thrift stores and we would pick up like the Carpenters or we'd pick up Earth, Wind and Fire, and Bread. We'd never listen to modern stuff when we were little kids. We just didn't like it very much.

**Sid Evans:** So this wasn't just you, this was also your siblings were kind of in the same camp?

**Madeline Edwards:** We were all the same. Me and my siblings are very close and we all had the same taste and we were a weird little family of weirdos.

**Sid Evans:** And wonderful. I mean, you've got this beautiful voice, Madeline. Was that something that your siblings shared as well, or did their musical interests come out in other ways?

**Madeline Edwards:** So, me and all of my siblings, I would say, are pretty decent musicians. My brother, that's actually still in Texas - he's in Houston, his name's Micah Edwards, and he has this amazing voice and he's kind of a cross between Leon Bridges and Charlie Crockett. But we all came out with really good voices and a lot of musical talent, which we have no idea where it came from because neither of our parents are musical. And even my sister. My sister is adopted. You wouldn't be able to tell because she looks just like us, but even she has some type of musical capability. So I'm not sure where it came from, but we all have it, and I think we're all decently talented at singing.

**Sid Evans:** Must be pretty fun at the holidays?

**Madeline Edwards:** Oh yes, we can drop some musical carols and Christmas carols at any point. We're like the Von Traps.

**Sid Evans:** You have this great song called "Trying to make sense," which is one of the first songs that I was exposed to of yours. And it's this very sort of jazzy song and it's got these vocal runs in it that sort of reminds me of Ella Fitzgerald. And I'm just wondering if she was an influence on you?

**Madeline Edwards:** The reason why I sing is because of Ella Fitzgerald. I remember hearing one of her songs when I was four. It was the scatting section in blue skies which to me still to this day is one of the most incredible things I've ever heard because she uses her voice to mimic the brass section in the song. And I just was so emotionally moved by it that I was like, " I think I want to do music for the rest of my life. I don't know what this looks like. I don't know if I'm going to be singing. I don't know if I'm going to

be doing music management. I don't know what this looks like, but I want to be in music. This is what I want to do." And I mean, I've even toyed with the idea of naming my daughter, if I ever have a daughter, Ella. She is a huge influence of mine and the reason why I do music today.

**Sid Evans:** Hmm. Well, so you're really into jazz as a kid and you're listening to all this stuff that most kids don't listen to. But then you're in high school in Texas, you must be hearing like George Strait and Willie Nelson and Alan Jackson and all these guys on the radio. Talk to me about your relationship with country music and how that kind of got started.

**Madeline Edwards:** Yeah. So we actually started listening to country music even before we moved to Texas, because whenever we'd go see my mom's family in Fresno, like I said, we'd put on country stations and that was kind of all that was playing in Fresno. And it would be a lot of what you just said, like Alan Jackson, Willie Nelson, Shania Twain, Reba, and so we were exposed to that also very early on. And I remember listening to that and thinking, well, this isn't jazz, but I really do like what's going on here. I love the storytelling in this. And once we got to Texas, it was just even more emphasized, I think, a little bit. Because at that point, especially since we were playing so many sports at that time, then you're listening to Kenny Chesney and Brad Paisley. And we were listening to Keith Urban, and Keith Urban was kind of the switch in my head a little bit, because I saw him doing this very emotional music and it was very meaningful and he was playing piano and I hadn't seen a lot of country artists playing piano. And to me it was like, this is such a beautiful genre and I don't know how I could fit this into my style, but I would love to find a way to do that somehow. Because I think it did make up who I was; I just didn't know how to quite do it at that point yet.

**Sid Evans:** Yeah. You know, I've heard you mention Shania Twain as an influence, and it is amazing to me how often she gets referenced by different artists. What was it about her music in particular that resonated with you?

**Madeline Edwards:** Shania, I think, is a huge influence to a lot of people, no matter what genre. I mean there has been times I've heard Harry Styles say that Shania was his biggest influence. I've heard Post Malone say that Shania Twain was his biggest influence, and Kacey Musgraves. You know what I mean? There are so many people that think of Shania in that way. And I think it's because, for me personally, when I was listening to her, with the kind of jazz background that I had, I heard her implementing jazz chords and jazz progressions into her music. And that's personally why I was so drawn to her. But I think why she has just surpassed any kind of genre or anything like that is because she has a way of taking her songwriting and the way she produces out her music. And it is able to cross multiple genres. And that's why her music has been popular in Australia. Her music's been popular in the UK. It's still popular in Asia. And it's because it's just crossing all boundaries. It was one of those phenomena in the nineties that yes, she was making country music, but you were hearing it all over pop radio. And I mean, she was competing with Christina Aguilera. She was up there with Britney Spears. You know what I mean? She was kind of still in that threshold of this music is so good that even though it is not "pop music," it was still able to live in that realm because she was able to find a way to marry the two sounds between country and pop and every other genre. And so I definitely see her as a genre defying artist, and I think most artists try to be that. And I think that's why she's such an influence to so many people.

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**(Instrumental music break of Biscuits and Jam theme)**

**Voice over from Sid:** I'll be back with more from Madeline Edwards after the break.

(AD BREAK)

**(Instrumental music break of Biscuits and Jam theme)**

**Voice over from Sid:** Welcome back to Biscuits & Jam, from Southern Living. I'm Sid Evans, and today I'm talking with Madeline Edwards

**Sid Evans:** You've clearly gotten the country bug and you moved to Nashville not long ago. What finally made you take that leap and what were the first few months in Nashville like for you?

**Madeline Edwards:** So I got married a year and a half ago and my husband and I were long distance at the time. He was in Mississippi and I was in Houston. And we were trying to decide a place to land. And I told him, I was like, it's funny. We actually talked about it just yesterday with everything going on with the Stapleton tour and everything happening. And he's like, man, it's just so funny to think that when we first started dating, actually on our first date, I told him, this is what I'm doing with music and this is what I want to do. And if you're going to be along for the ride, you need to be okay with this. There's a possibility of this being bigger than I even think it could be. And is this okay with you? And he is, I mean, he's the most supportive partner I could ever ask for. But we were trying to decide on a place to move after we got married. And I knew that my career would not be able to do what it needed to in Mississippi. And we were having a hard time finding a job for him in Houston. And so we were kind of toying with the ideas of LA and Nashville and New York and Nashville was just kind of a place that we decided on just because it was kind of still close to both of our families and it was a place that I could pursue music and probably maybe do well. The first few months in Nashville were very slow. It was still kind of during COVID times and nothing was totally open yet. And it was very anti-climatic. I mean, you moved there with these big dreams and these big goals. And I remember for the first year I was just sitting, I was just writing my own music. I put out my first EP that did seemingly well, called The Road, and everything was pretty low key. There was nothing too, too much that happened. And then all of a sudden out of nowhere, I get the call from Amanda Shires, who's in The Highwomen, and she asked me to be on this song for Lady Gaga's 10 year anniversary of Born This Way. And from that point on, things just kind of snowballed into this really big... Then it was the CMAs. And then it was getting asked to go on tour with the Stapletons. And then it was just all of these things just lined back to back to back. So it's funny. I think a lot of people think that the first year it was just like we got here and then everything happened all at once. But really, for the first six to eight months, it was very much just like a game of us twiddling our thumbs and wondering if we made the right decision to move to Nashville.

**Sid Evans:** Well, some people twiddle their thumbs for a lot longer than that. I talked to Walker Hayes recently and I think it took him more like 10 years or longer.

**Madeline Edwards:** Right.

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**Sid Evans:** But I want to ask you about something that happened that seems pretty transformative. So I interviewed Mickey Guyton and Brittany Spencer on this podcast and you had a great performance with them at the CMA Awards last year for a song called Love my Hair. Talk to me about how that came together and what that moment meant for you.

**Madeline Edwards:** Yeah. So I had met Mickey and Brittany when I first moved to Nashville through a mutual friend and kept a friendship with them. It wasn't... We weren't like super, super close or anything like that. And so I was really shocked when Mickey FaceTimed me one day to ask me about the CMAs. She FaceTimed both me and Brittany at the same time and was like, I just got off of a meeting with the producers of the CMAs and they asked me, "Do you want to bring anyone else to sing this song with you?" And her answer was, "Brittany and Madeline." And it was shocking to me because I hadn't had this longstanding relationship with this woman and yet she's inviting me to be a part of this incredible moment in this insane space. And also, I just hadn't been in Nashville that long. I know that Brittany and Mickey had had a way longer run in Nashville than I did. And there were a lot of other artists that she could have asked to do that. So it was a big moment for my career, in that sense. But also, as we got closer to the performance, it wasn't even just about my career anymore. It was kind of more this taking a step back and realizing that this was a really big moment for country music. This was a really big moment for the CMAs, having this many black women on stage representing country music. And it would've been a historical moment and is a historical moment. And once that weight kind of set in, then I was like, oh, this isn't just a big moment for my career. This is a big moment for country music and for American history as we know it and just seeing how things are progressing. And so, it was really special. It was very emotional for me. I remember crying backstage with my manager. I remember crying backstage with Mickey and Brittany. It was this moment that I feel like all of us can kind of look back on and be like, we really changed the game with this and we continue to do that. And it's exciting.

**Sid Evans:** Well, and the girl who introduced y'all, who, as I recall, had been told that she couldn't wear her hair that way at school. They told her she was going to have to change her hair and then she ended up introducing y'all at the CMAs.

**Madeline Edwards:** It was a big moment for her. It was such a full circle of events for her, for me, for Mickey, for Brittany, for all of us. I'm super proud of her. Her name's Faith. and also like I would've loved to see the expression on her teacher's face after her announcing that. It's just kind of like, look how far she's come and look how much work we all still have to do in terms of making a safe space for women and a safe space for women of color to be represented really well. Not in just music, but in our country in general. And I think that was a really amazing way to introduce the song, which was...

**Sid Evans:** That's so true.

**Madeline Edwards:** I don't know. It was just great.

**Sid Evans:** So you've mentioned Chris Stapleton. You've been touring with him. I've just got to ask. What are some things that you've learned from that experience?

**Madeline Edwards:** Yeah. I love touring with the Stapletons. I love the Stapletons in general. I always talk about it. I just, I think so highly of them as people and as artists. He is very dedicated to his craft and it's



really made me want to dive in even deeper to my own. And it makes you understand why he's so good at what he does is because he is really just obsessed with the perfection of his craft and it's inspiring to me. But at the same time, his family is there and he makes so much time for them. And Morgan, his wife, has been so gracious to me. I mean, she just kind of took me under her wing as soon as I got to Nashville and she's been so sweet and I don't know, it's been really cool to see the balance of music and family in their whole world and just how that works because music is obviously very important to me. It always has been. But family is also very important. Not just my immediate family with my mom and my siblings and making sure that I'm able to take care of them, but also, my husband and the family that we're hopefully going to be creating one day. I want to make sure that there's a healthy balance between me pouring in all of my heart and soul into my music and into my craft and making sure that it's perfect, but also I want to be able to balance that and be a good wife at home. I want to be able to be a good mother one day. So being able to see the balance of that with them has been really cool.

**Sid Evans:** Hmm. Well, Madeline, it's been a big month for you. It's been a big year for you. And I want to ask you about your new EP. You have this new self-titled EP out, and there's a wonderful track on there that you mentioned that's called Port City. And it sounds like a little bit of a love song to Houston, to me. Tell me a little bit about where that song came from and what was on your mind at the time.

**Madeline Edwards:** I wrote that with two brilliant writers, Court Clement, who's out of Nashville and then Josh Moore, who's been my producer for a minute now. I wrote it with both of them and it is kind of my love letter to Houston. It's like a love letter and a goodbye letter at the same time. It's kind of just that leap that I made after I got married. And I was like I really want to do this. And I think this might be my last chance to do really do this right. Because I'm getting older and I'm wanting to start a family at some point. And so, if we're going to do this, we're going to go all in. We're going to do the damn thing. You know? And so, this was kind of my Houston, you've been so good to me. You've taught me so much. But in order to take the leap to do what I think I need to do in order to make this work, I have to say goodbye to you. I think everyone has that leap at some point. For me, Port City was about Houston and it was about leaving my friends and family and my whole community there. But I think when people listen to that song, it can represent a lot of things. It can represent moving away from home for the first time. It could represent getting married for the first time, taking a leap and starting your own company, you taking a leap and starting to have a family. So I just want people to be able to hear that song and input their own life circumstances and feel the fear and the tension, and the excitement, and the joy of taking a leap like that and starting something new.

***Madeline's song, "Port City" comes in and we hear the following at full volume then fades out:***

*And I don't know where I'll land  
Like I don't know where the tides takes the sand  
Where I go, I might not understand  
But I'm leaving this port city  
With the hopes of finding land  
If I don't sink now, I may never learn to swim*

**Sid Evans:** Well, I think like any great song, which that is, I think you can take away from it, what you need, and you can hear it in your own way. And it's a beautifully written song.

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**Madeline Edwards:** Thank you.

**Sid Evans:** I want to ask you about another one that is totally different, and it's this song called Hold My Horses. And this one is a total rocker. I mean, it's very different than your earlier stuff. And I'm just wondering, what were you tapping into when you wrote that one? Because it does feel so different, and it's so fun, and it sounds like a great song to play in front of 30,000 people at a Chris Stapleton show. So talk to me about that one.

**Madeline Edwards:** Yeah. So I have to start by saying, I wrote that with two other women. The fact that that song was written by three women, I think is the most badass thing in the world. I think it competes with all of the music that men are putting out on the radio. It was written with a girl that I write with, actually, in Texas that helped me write the road and several other songs that I've written. Her name's Joy Hannah, and then Claire [inaudible 00:40:38]. And I'd say this all the time, but I think low key, I'm a closet rocker. I know that my background's in classical and jazz, but at the end of the day, I think just given all of the experiences I have had in my past, and all of the angst and the power, but all the rebellion that I have in me, I'm able to put that out in music. And if you see me perform live, a lot of people see me and they even say, "We see you transform on stage. You become a different person. You become this huge powerhouse." Where, me in person, like you're seeing it right now, I'm a total nerd. And I'm like weird and awkward, and I say weird things, and I do weird things. And in person, I'm a completely different personality than I am on stage. And I think, on stage, I embody this. I've been through a lot of pain, and this is how I've manifested it. It's me taking that, and making myself a better person, but also wanting to encourage other people to claim their own power, claim their own success and their own trajectory of where they're going. And so I feel like with Hold My Horses, it was my first step into that world of, actually, I think I can make this really positively aggressive music that is still rooted in country, and it's this swampy Southern feel, but also has this bit of angsty rock vibe to it that I think would resonate well with people, but also still be commercial. And so that's where that song was born. And I'm so proud of that song. I love it so much. I still, to this day, I rock out to it all the time.

**Madeline song, "Hold My Horses" comes in and we hear the following at full volume then fades out:**

*I can't hold my horses  
'Cause I ain't that stable  
Yeah, I know I oughta break 'em  
But I haven't been able  
To keep from kickin' up the dust  
Runnin' over the canyon  
I give into the forces  
'Cause I can't hold my horses*

**Sid Evans:** Sounds like you're channeling a little Shania Twain maybe.

**Madeline Edwards:** Yes. Always. Always channeling Shania for sure.

**Sid Evans:** Or Brandi Carlile too.

**Madeline Edwards:** Yeah, Brandi's really good about that too, channeling that inner angst, I think

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**Sid Evans:** So I want to ask you a Texas question. So a couple of years ago, we did a story about how to make a ranch water, which is not a very complicated cocktail.

**Madeline Edwards:** No, it's not.

**Sid Evans:** But the story just took off, and every time we write about ranch water, it takes off. And as someone who loves to make cocktails, can you please tell me what is the secret of a good ranch water?

**Madeline Edwards:** Oh, my gosh. I love this question so much. This is probably my favorite question that you've asked so far. This is amazing. Okay. So I have to preface it with no one, other than Texans, call it ranch water, I feel like. And we're so pretentious about it, that anytime I ask for a ranch water in Nashville, no bartenders know what I'm talking about. And then I have to explain it to them, and they roll their eyes at me, and they're like, "Okay, so you want a tequila soda." So the secret to ranch water is the lime juice. It's not just a little splash of lime. It's definitely fresh squeezed, fresh out of the grocery store, off the tree, or whatever you get fresh limes, you squeeze the juice. And I always put probably an ounce of lime juice with tequila, and then with a Topo Chico. So in my personal opinion, it's not a true ranch water unless you make sure that the sparkling water that you add is Topo Chico. So you can have a tequila soda, but it's not the same in my opinion.

**Sid Evans:** So a lot of lime juice. And what is it about the Topo Chico?

**Madeline Edwards:** Topo Chico to me is the best sparkling water. It has more bite to it, and it stays carbonated longer. So there have been times that I've even kept a Topo Chico out on the counter for a whole day, and I'll go back and drink it later, and it's still carbonated. It's not flat, And so we're very proud Texas people. And if it comes to anything, Texas will always tell you it's better than everything else. But Topo Chico is definitely what makes a ranch water good. And if you put salt or tajin on the rim with a lime, that makes it... It's like the chef's kiss to a ranch water.

**Sid Evans:** You can't beat it.

**Madeline Edwards:** No.

**Sid Evans:** Well, Madeline, I just have one more question for you. What does it mean to you to be Southern?

**Madeline Edwards:** That's a good question. To me being Southern means this deep appreciation for everything that makes the south, which is just this good old Southern appeal. Everyone is kind to each other here. The south has this way of taking a lot of pride in making sure everyone feels at home, whether that's with a good home cooked meal, or inviting people over and listening to music with them, or being a part of the family. It's also this ability to accept the mistakes that the south has made and want to make them better. And I feel like I've always surrounded myself with a really good community in whether it be in Texas or in Nashville, just anyone in the south that has understood that and has made steps towards this is how I think we can make the south better and more accepting of everybody, which they already do so well. The south already has this amazing heart in bringing people in and wanting them to feel loved, and wanting to make them a good home cooked meal, and making them feel like

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family, and just extending that even more to different groups of people. And I think that's really important. And that's why I'm really proud to say that I'm from the south, and be a face that looks different than what I think people would expect to see of the south. Obviously, I'm a woman from a mixed race household, and I love country music, and I love good food. I love good Southern food. I love good Mexican food. And I don't know. I think it's really cool to see people like me that claim the south because then it looks different than what people think that it looks. And so I think that's my pride around it, and that's why I love it so much.

**Sid Evans:** Beautifully said. All that and a good ranch water, and you can't go wrong,

**Madeline Edwards:** Come over anytime, and I will make you the best ranch water, best margarita you've ever had.

**Sid Evans:** Well, Madeline Edwards, thanks so much for being on Biscuits & Jam.

**Madeline Edwards:** Thank you for having me. This has been an absolute joy, so thank you.

**Voiceover from Sid:** Thanks for listening to my conversation with Madeline Edwards. You can check out her debut self-titled EP wherever you get your music. Make sure to visit [MadelineEdwardsMusic.com](https://MadelineEdwardsMusic.com) for tour dates and more. Southern Living is based in Birmingham, AL. Be sure to follow Biscuits & Jam on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or wherever you listen. And we'd love your feedback. If you could rate this podcast and leave us a review we'd really appreciate it. You can also find us online at [southernliving.com/biscuitsandjam](https://southernliving.com/biscuitsandjam) We'll be taking a quick break, but make sure to join us back here on September 27th when we kick off a slate of brand new episodes of Biscuits & Jam.