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On the Verge: Chris Wallace opts to 'Push Rewind' solo

by: Brian Mansfield



The former White Tie Affair frontman steps out on his own.

As usual, everything goes back to a girl. Chris Wallace wrote his effervescent pop hit *Remember When (Push Rewind)* about the one he was seeing when his career took off. That relationship fell apart under the strain of pursuing pop stardom, but eternal optimist Wallace likes to look back at its best times. "As my future got bright, we started losing light, and I couldn't see that you were the one," he sings in the first verse of the song, which is No. 24 on USA TODAY's top 40 airplay chart.

The song's video, much of which plays backward, has 1.27 million YouTube views. "*Remember When* is like a celebration of that relationship, like 'remember when everything was amazing' and questioning why we ever said goodbye," says Wallace, 27. "I guess, at the end of the day, I'm pretty positive. Even though the album's called *Push Rewind*, I'm always looking forward."

An Affair to remember: Wallace's previous group, the White Tie Affair, broke out of the Chicago pop-punk scene, notched a No. 22 top 40 hit with *Candle (Sick and Tired)* in 2009 and toured with Lady Gaga. But it was a short-lived Affair. "We took a little break, and it became a permanent break," Wallace says. "But I just kind of got started and kept going." *Remember When* came out last summer, less than a month after the band officially announced its split.

Wallace knew if he didn't get new music into the marketplace, he'd lose any momentum he'd built with the band. "In the pop world, a couple years is a long time," he says. "People come and go very quickly. We had a minor hit, did a bunch of touring and got a fan base. But, really, it was like starting over again." Wallace released his *Push Rewind* album in September.

Is this the real life?: Wallace's love of flashy, well-crafted pop tunes traces back to his first CD: his parents' copy of Queen's *A Night at the Opera*. "It was the only one I had, so I became obsessed with it," he says. The album, which included flamboyant '70s rock hits *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *You're My Best Friend*, set him on his course. "Even now, my stage performance and the way I sing my songs have certain dynamics like that album does, if you ask me."

Back home again in Indiana: Wallace grew up in Hebron, Ind., about an hour outside Chicago, becoming obsessed with music after getting his first guitar while recuperating from a broken collarbone. "Basically, nobody really believed – or even understood – what I was doing until I got a record deal," he says. "And it was a major label and everything, so everyone was like, 'Oh, we get it now!'"

Police on his back: Wallace's performing career got off to an auspicious start in high school – with neighbors calling the police on the house party where he was playing. Wallace wound up running through a nearby field, guitar in hand. On the plus side, "it was the first time I played in front of people, and I was the singer of the band at the party," he says. "That reverberates through high school."

Just somebody that he used to know: Wallace will perform Wednesday on *Live With Kelly & Michael*. Maybe the woman who inspired *Remember When* (*Push Rewind*) will watch him, but Wallace has no idea if she has heard the song about her. "I haven't spoken to her in three or four years," he says. "I hear she's married and has a child."



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