

# JON



# H O P E



## **Camp St. & Comstock (Edited) Dir. by Colby Blanchet**

My intent was to create something that spoke directly to the people in my community. I think many times, artists who come from obscure places try to follow trends of other major cities and that doesn't necessarily yield the best results. I decided to create a record that included our own language, spirit, and culture. It was one of the few times that the outcome matched my intent and that's very challenging for a songwriter.

Social justice is a loaded term. Unfortunately, it's often reduced to hashtags or performative allies just wanting to appear woke. I think my record, *A Guy Named Harry*, speaks to creating value in a section of Providence that is often overlooked or forgotten. The messaging in my record plants the seed of unity and looking past proximity violence and self-defeating behavior. If they can get this message coated in dope beats and rhymes, I think it'll resonate.

Higher Education is a bastion for elitism and I pride myself on being a sort of outlier. Despite my educational credentials and experiences, I don't really posture as an expert but simply as someone who likes to share. Therefore, if I see an outlet in which I can make a valuable contribution, I enter and explore. This is how I approach my classroom as a faculty instructor at Roger Williams University's School of Continuing Studies where I teach Hip Hop from a critical lens. The classroom is a space for relational and intellectual reciprocity: I learn from my students as much as they learn from me.