



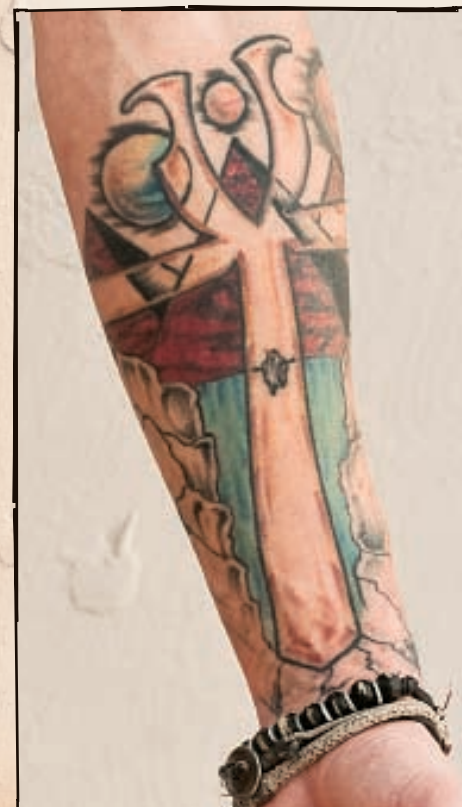
not a mammal or fish; it's its own thing and I wanted something to represent my pursuit of originality and of being unique," he says. "I've come to learn that in some Asian cultures it's also a symbol of fertility, which I never thought of as a bad thing. Until now that I've got three kids, that is. I may have to get it covered."

Ben Reese also did the hammerhead shark, while James Lovette did his "Chicago" band "Joey's hometown) on the other arm on his other arm, which also bears another vulture loosely based on a Tony Hawks skateboard design and a Sylvia Ji sugar skull commemorating a lost friend. The eternal flame on the back of that arm is dedicated to Joey's wife, while the 100-proof bottle of "crazy liquor with weed leaves and pitbull paws and brass knuckles with blood dripping and dice and cards that pretty much represent the first four years of the band, which was just debauchery and craziness."

He also has "Aequitas" ("Justice") written on his right index finger, with John sporting the corresponding "Veritas" (Truth) on his. It signifies brotherhood, Joey says, hinting at a bottle of vodka that was involved in the process.

The neck tattoo was done by Shane Yoder. The gas mask represents the band's first album cover as well as the band's perceived protection from the music industry's "bullshit that you have to deal with," while the lotus flower indicates the only other band name that had ever been considered, "Lotus Effect."

Most prominent on Joey may be the skulls with what he calls "rock stars" on top of them; he has them on his right upper arm and his right calf. They represent his feelings about trying hard to become a musician while others become famous "merely by puking on themselves or whatever."



The skulls on his leg also represent the various guitar players that have left Egypt Central so far. "I have seven skulls there," he laughs. "But Jeff's been with us for a long time now and he doesn't have a skull, so I haven't jinxed him yet."

To Joey, getting tattooed is a sort of spiritual release, and he plans on one day having his entire body covered. "And when I run out of space, I'll just have my kids tattooed with the stuff I like," he says. "Hey, I'm just kidding! I'll just start touching things up."

Like his band mates, Jeff James is still a work in progress. "My left arm isn't even complete yet," he says. "On my forearm I have the broken ankh by James Lovette, which is the original Egypt Central symbol, and I have hieroglyphs on the back of my arm that say 'Egypt Central.'"

The piece on the back of his arm is a collage of a picture he had found in some random magazine when he was in middle school. He drew it up and eventually ended up giving the drawing to Joey to see if Joey could make "something cool out of it."

Oach in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, inked the collage and then touched up everything else on Jeff's arm. He also has his son's initials on his right hand ("He's my right-hand man") and his own on the left. Currently in the works is a phoenix on his left biceps that's being filled right now, and after that Jeff says he wants to get his back filled up but doesn't have a clue yet what it might be. "And that'll be it for then, I think," he says.

Meanwhile, Egypt Central will continue to race across the country, spreading the word of the *White Rabbit* and living its members' collective dream. Chances are, the band will be in your hometown soon.

—H.T. Booth

