

DELETER

Interviewed by The Silver Age, August 13th, 2024

Deleter is a Philadelphia-based indie rock band comprised of Jon, Johnny, Nick, and Sophie. Deleter's single "Buzzcut Barbie Collection" is featured in the film *Coven of the Black Cube*. Most recently, the band released their third single, "bumping and grinding rails." For updates on releases and shows, follow @deleterband on Instagram and listen to their music on Spotify.

ALICIA LOPEZ: So, I guess, can we start with your name, your age, where you're based, and what instrument you play?

SOPHIE: I'm Sophie. I'm 27. I do vocals and, depending on the song, bass or guitar or nothing. Previously keys, no longer the keys. Sometimes the kazoo. One song. That song has kind of drifted away, but...

JON: I'm Jonathan. I'm 27 years old. I'm based all the time. I play the guitar. I sing into a microphone from time to time. Um, what else did I have to say?

SOPHIE: You play bass sometimes.

JON: I play bass sometimes.

JOHNNY: My name's Johnny. I'm 27. I'm the drummer. And I'm based out of Philadelphia. South Philly. Yeah, that's it.

NICK: And I'm Nick. 26. I play the guitar. And I'm based out of South Philly too.

MICHAEL AUBLE: When do you turn 27? Like, is there a moment when you guys are all 27?

SOPHIE: November.

NICK: November 15th.

SOPHIE: It's like one month. No, but we're all within a year of each other.

A.L.: So what type of music would you say you guys play?

JOHNNY: Indie rock, I feel like, is the easiest. It's kind of what we've...

SOPHIE: I feel like, start with rock, and then it's, like, some branch off of rock.

JOHNNY: It's like a little indie rock, a little post-punk, little...

JON: Bo peep.

SOPHIE: What did we say? I think originally, in the beginning, we were like, "a high school garage band, if they were good."

JOHNNY: We had keyboards early on, so we sort of sounded new wave-y early on, but now not as much.

SOPHIE: Now sometimes midwestern emo.

JOHNNY: Yeah, a little emo. We all have different influences, I feel like.

JON: Yeah, I feel like we'll jump from being DEVO to being emo.

SOPHIE: Yeah. To being, like, bluesy.

JON: To being bluesy. E-I-E-I-O

JOHNNY: Okay, you're doing Little Bo-Peep.

JON: We're actually a folk band.

SOPHIE: That's the only thing that's not true.

JON: We play only folk and nursery rhymes.

JOHNNY: Sophie brings a folksy aspect to the band, though, I would say.

SOPHIE: But, like, it's not – we don't play folk music.

JOHNNY: No, we don't play folk music. Folk you feel in your soul. It's not in here, it's in the feel.

SOPHIE: In the lyrics.

COLE GABORIAULT: How did you come up with the name Deleter?

JON: So, I used to make comic books, and you know when you see in a comic the little dots? They come in a – history lesson, guys – they come in, like, this plastic sheet, and you would have to cut out the pieces and then stick them to the paper to put those dots on there. There was a brand of that in Japan that's called Deleter. I just thought it sounded cool.

SOPHIE: I thought it was Deleter Junior.

JON: It was Deleter Junior originally because there was also a brand called Deleter Junior. I thought that was fun because I liked Dinosaur Junior.

JOHNNY: It's kind of an anti-Dinosaur Junior.

SOPHIE: But then our first drummer was like, "I don't like that it sounds like Dinosaur Junior," so we just cut the junior.

C.G.: We'll circle back to the comic books at the end. How did you all meet and form a band?

SOPHIE: So, Jon and I worked at a corner store together, and there were two other people who worked there who were playing music. Jon started playing with them. I said, "let me come join you and play music." I joined them, and then Jon brought Nick. They've known each other for some time.

JOHNNY: We also had another original member, Keith –

SOPHIE: Who was one of those people.

JON: He was run over by a trolley on the way over here.

SOPHIE: No, he moved back to, like, Tennessee? The South. He moved to the South. And then at some point our drummer, a few months in, was just like, "eh." And so then they got Johnny...

JOHNNY: I'm a hired session musician from LA. No, I knew Jon from beforehand.

SOPHIE: There was, like, South Philly connections.

M.A.: How long have each of you as individuals been playing music on your own, and then how long have you been playing together?

SOPHIE: I would say we started at the beginning of 2023.

JON: We've been doing it for like a year and some change.

SOPHIE: I feel like a year and a half. We played our first show April of '23. And we had a few months without Johnny first.

JON: Yeah, so I guess Deleter having a name...

SOPHIE: Like a year and a half.

JON: This incarnation of the band, probably a little under a year and a half.

JOHNNY: So when did you start playing music initially personally?

SOPHIE: I did choir growing up. I learned how to play guitar in, like, middle school. I grew up playing piano, and then – but this was very new for me, playing plugged-in instruments. Being in a *band* band. I played folk music at farm camp before that.

JON: I got a guitar for Christmas when I was 12. I hated it because it hurt my fingers real bad, so I didn't play it. Then I turned 16, and my friend was like, "we should start a band. We can get girls and stuff." And I was like, "oh hell yeah." So I started playing it again. And I wasn't that good. I learned how to play "Seven Nation Army," and I learned how to play "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." And here I am now, still playing those two songs. I haven't learned anything else. I'm really good at playing them though.

JOHNNY: You got the band part down. You just didn't get the chicks.

SOPHIE: Yoooooo! Ayy!

JOHNNY: Burn, burn. I'm sorry.

JON: How do you think you got here?

JOHNNY: Yeah, I know. I'm the chick. I know. No, I've been drumming for –

JON: Oh yeah, babe, it's your turn to talk.

JOHNNY: No, I've been drumming for I think about, what? Like, probably like 10 days now. About 10 minutes so far.

SOPHIE: He was pretending up until last weekend.

JOHNNY: Yeah, about 10, somewhere between – whatever is between 10 and 15. I'll say 12 years.

SOPHIE: 12.5 years.

JOHNNY: 12.5 years on the dot. No, yeah, something like that. I mean, I think probably since I was like 15 or something, you know, I was – I mean, I always did it a little bit, but I actually joined a band and played consistently.

NICK: Yeah, kind of same here, like 10 years. I'd seen how cool Prince and Jimi Hendrix look playing guitar, and I was like, “damn, I want to be as skinny and cool as that.” And I got an iPod and figured out how easy it is to make music, and the rest is like, you know, nonsense here and there.

A.L.: So, you mentioned Jimi Hendrix and Prince – are there other influences for you individually or the rest of y'all?

JOHNNY: I feel like we all have very different – I feel like we could probably go down the line and rattle stuff off.

JON: Kamala Harris.

SOPHIE: Her folk album is really...

JOHNNY: She's actually a really obscure...

JON: Her folk album, called *Falling Off the Coconut Tree*.

SOPHIE: It's funny, because I don't think about her that often, but Janis Joplin – like, that album¹ definitely changed things. Listening to *Pearl*, I was like, “yooooo, that singing.”

JOHNNY: You're a belter.

SOPHIE: Yeah, I like Adrienne Lenker's songwriting a lot. I'm trying to think about, like – I used to listen to a lot of James Taylor. Which is funny, because when you hear us, you're gonna be like, “what?” But these are the

¹ *Pearl* was playing at the time of the interview.

musicians that I grew up listening to. Or, like, Adrienne Lenker's more recent, but I feel like when I'm writing songs, it's just me quietly strumming my acoustic guitar.

JON: What inspires me? Jonathan Richman, DEVO, Guided by Voices, The Beatles.

JOHNNY: Those are good ones. I feel like that's it.

JON: Yeah, that's it.

JOHNNY: I feel like I like post-punky stuff. So, like, Gang of Four and Killing Joke. Like, you know, that little edge, that little disco-y type of –

JON: I love a funky beat and a nasty guitar.

SOPHIE: That's actually our genre.

JOHNNY: Nasty beat and a funky guitar. Yeah, you know, the kind of post-punky stuff, I feel like, is the inspiration for my drumming.

NICK: Yeah, I mean, I kind of said my main two, but anybody that's an off-branch –

JOHNNY: I feel like you also bring a kind of emo – like, that kind of emo guitar playing to –

NICK: Anything and everything emo.

JOHNNY: Yeah, like, what are some bands that you think –

NICK: He's interviewing me now.

JOHNNY: I'm interviewing you because I know – we need to get this out of you. We're not – we have to know. We need to know. I'm just as curious as they are.

NICK: That's it.

A.L.: And do you have any inspirations, like, as a band that you try to go for?

SOPHIE: I feel like sometimes The Pixies or Sonic Youth.

JOHNNY: Guided by Voices is also a good one, I feel like.

JON: Yeah, in terms of what I would like to be like, I guess Guided by Voices and The Pixies. We've been compared sound-wise to The Pixies, Yo La Tengo, The Cranberries.

SOPHIE: Anything that's, like, one female vocalist and then some instruments, and it's kind of – it's, like, rock, but it's pared down.

JOHNNY: I think it's also, like – it's one of those things where we just like making music.

JON: We're very '90s-pilled.

JOHNNY: Yeah, I agree. That's why I said, like, indie rock. I think Pavement's another big one, you know, that's a big touchstone for us. I think it's one of those things where we all just wanted to start a band. I feel like Guided by Voices is a good one, cause it's just, like, they all just wanted to make a band. They were just having fun being in a band and making music, you know? It's like, this isn't, like, a job thing for us, or an ego thing. It's just, like –

JON: It's just fun to do.

JOHNNY: We just want to be in a band together.

JON: I've often said that we're the laziest band in Philadelphia.

M.A.: That's tough competition.

JOHNNY: We're all here. I mean...

JON: Which obviously is not true. We've played a bunch of shows. We've come all the way out here for this interview that you were kind enough to do for us. I just feel like it's more in terms of, like, "hey, you wanna practice? We should practice this week." "I don't really feel like it." "Okay." And then it will just happen like three weeks in a row.

SOPHIE: Cause we're all friends, so we're like, "okay, if you can't do it, it's fine." No one's gonna be mad.

JON: Exactly. It's not like, "ugh, that guy never comes to practice." Which is fair, cause there have been many times that I also don't feel like going.

JOHNNY: I've seen worse, honestly.

C.G.: So, did you guys go to school, and if so, what for?

SOPHIE: I just finished school for teaching. I'm gonna be teaching first grade this coming year. It's my first full lead teacher position, but I've worked with elementary school kids and kids with reading issues for the last five or so years.

JON: Being in this band is preparing Sophie a lot for how children act.

JOHNNY: Three of the biggest man-children around.

M.A.: Where were you studying?

SOPHIE: At Temple.

JON: I also studied at Temple for a little bit, and then I transferred to this school called the Hussian School of Art, which doesn't exist anymore, because it was a scam. I dropped out before I could get my money back. And here I am. No, it was fine. I learned how to draw a lot better, and that was cool. I met some cool people.

M.A.: Come on, man. You should have gone to UArts.

JOHNNY: The last one was a scam, but this one's going to work out.

M.A.: I've got a good feeling about UArts.

JOHNNY: No, I specifically didn't go to school for – I mean, not that reason, but I got my GED, and then just...

NICK: Yeah, I didn't go to college or anything either. I didn't know what I really wanted to do that made sense, but... so I just never went.

A.L.: So are you guys self-taught or musically trained? Sounds like maybe both?

SOPHIE: I took piano lessons. I learned some guitar on my own, then took some lessons, and then was like, "eh."

JON: I was taught by ultimate-guitar.com.

C.G.: That's the best teacher.

JOHNNY: I was self-taught.

NICK: YouTube University.

JOHNNY: Yeah, man. I just put headphones on and drum along to music and just would do that.

C.G.: As a group, what does your music writing process look like?

SOPHIE: It depends on the song.

JON: Yeah, we have songs where it'll just be – you know, it'll come to practice completely done. Like, all the instrument parts are really thought out. Nothing really changes. And then there will be times where we just fuck around in practice, and we'll write a song. Like, that's how "Lame-o" was kind of written, I think.

SOPHIE: Yeah, "Buzzcut."

JON: "Buzzcut Barbie."

JOHNNY: We'll jam on some stuff.

SOPHIE: Usually music first. Usually if a song comes already written, it's Jon's song, or Jon and Nick have done it together. Every once in a while they'll jam on something that's really nice, and I'll be sitting there writing words, and then they'll move on, and then like two weeks later, I'll be like "can you do that again? Cause it was really good."

M.A.: How do you guys approach writing lyrics?

SOPHIE: I've written most of them.

JON: Sophie's definitely got the best lyric writing out of everybody in the group hands down.

SOPHIE: And sometimes they don't even realize it's a group process. Like one of my favorite songs – we had the music, and then we were like, "let's sit together and write lyrics." And Jon was just, like, going off about something else, and I said, "just keep talking." And I was, like, taking notes, and by then end I had a song.

JOHNNY: Sometimes you've also – you've done almost, like, Mad Libs, where you'll be sitting, and you'll be like, "what would you say for this?"

SOPHIE: Yeah, or, like, we had a song called "Lame-o," and I was like, "what are some things that are lame?" And they were telling me, and I was putting it into lyric form. You know, like...

JON: Lost pair of keys.

SOPHIE: The lost pair of keys.

JOHNNY: You're definitely the lyrical – I feel like she's the lyrical miracle.

SOPHIE: That's a new one.

A.L.: So then what themes would you say y'all explore in your songs?

SOPHIE: Stupidity?

JON: Stupid shit – nah. We don't take ourselves super seriously. We have our songs that are more kind of, like, bummed-out sort of songs. But I feel like if you watch us play, we never – you know, we're not like those bands with hair on our faces like, “ugh,” you know?

SOPHIE: We're having a ball. But I feel like not taking ourselves seriously is a good – it's, like, just commenting on life and feelings in a silly way, usually.

JOHNNY: We usually don't. I feel like if we just see ourselves getting too overly serious and negative –

SOPHIE: When has that ever –

JOHNNY: I don't know. I just feel like *Lame-o* is a good example where it's just like, “okay, what's the balance for, like – we don't want to get too goofy, but we also don't want to get too serious.” Or maybe those things kind of balance each other out.

JON: Like, “*Mountains*,” I feel like, is the only song that's just somber.

SOPHIE: Or “*Solstice*.” Or they're just really vague.

JOHNNY: But “*Solstice*” is kind of funny. It's a joke, the concept of that song.

SOPHIE: That's true.

JOHNNY: It's a love song about –

SOPHIE: A skeleton. You know, the Home Depot skeletons. There was one behind my apartment, and then it didn't get taken down for like two years. And we just wrote a song about it.

C.G.: Circling back, do you guys have things that you do outside of music? Other art, other hobbies, interests – comic books, for instance?

JON: Yeah. It's been a while. I used to do it a lot because I had my @goodeest_greef Instagram. And I would do a lot of comics, and I did little zines for a while. I would do, like, little art festivals where I would try to sell them. And it's fun. It's obviously – it's fucking very labor intensive. You got to write, you got to draw. You got to come up with a good idea.

A.L.: I hate that.

JON: I hate having to actually do the thing that I enjoy. I wish I didn't like doing things sometimes. I mean, I still draw. I just don't – I'm not as worried now about, like, posting it or coming up with a comic with a plot and a punchline. Yeah. That's what I do.

JOHNNY: I do movie stuff, film stuff. Short films, features, stuff like that. Work on other movies.

JON: You're working on a movie right now, aren't you?

JOHNNY: I'm working on movie right now starring Jon. That's how we got connected, through it, and I wound up in the band. I actually also did the music video that we put out for our song, "Buzzcut Barbie Collection."

NICK: Besides music, I don't know. I'm pretty boring. I fix arcade machines for work.

M.A.: That's awesome.

SOPHIE: You also do – you have a whole other music project.

JON: What he's not doing music, he's doing music.

JOHNNY: He's got his whole alter ego.

A.L.: What is the alter ego?

NICK: Oh, I have – which is kind of the same band, but we go by Nolan Weaver.²

SOPHIE: That's your project.

JOHNNY: We're the backing band.

JON: It's less collaborative and more us helping Nick get his ideas across. Well, in a live sense.

JOHNNY: The songs are out already.

SOPHIE: Yeah, go listen to *Nolan Weaver*, self-titled.

JON: Go listen to the *Nolan Weaver* EP. It's really good.

NICK: Thank you.

JOHNNY: Since he won't say it himself.

NICK: I don't want to be that guy.

JOHNNY: That's what this is for.

JON: Jon Balbi played guitar on some of it.

NICK: He did. Johnny didn't really even do nothin, but thanks.

JOHNNY: I'm learning the songs now though.

SOPHIE: Uh... I walk around in the woods. Walk in the woods.

A.L.: What are you guys working on now as a band?

JON: We finally bit the bullet and subscribed to – what is it?

SOPHIE: eMastered.

JON: eMastered, so we can master the album.

² [instagram.com/nolanweev](https://www.instagram.com/nolanweev)

SOPHIE: That we recorded months ago. We have another – like, we basically recorded songs in two parts. One part was last summer. Like, 2023. We've put out two of the songs. So, those are ready to go, but just need the art, which I'm going to make you all do tonight before we all go home. And then the other four we recorded in like May or something, we got mixed by our friend, Luis. So now we have to master them. And we've been trying this or that.

JON: It's very hard.

SOPHIE: It's not that hard. Ten dollars each, [eMastered.com](https://www.emastered.com). And they sound good. That's what we're working on. And a potential music video with some guy from the internet who liked our songs.

JON: What's his name Johnny?

JOHNNY: Brewce Longo.

JON: Brewce Longo!

SOPHIE: Johnny's been – because he reached out and was like, “oh, I really like the song ‘Buzzcut Barbie.’”

JOHNNY: Yeah. He has a movie out right now called *Coven of the Black Cube*, which has a bunch of Philly bands on the soundtrack. And Deleter has a song – including us. We're on there with, like, Mystic Savage, like, a bunch of, like, hardcore and metal bands from Philly.

JON: Which Deleter is one of.

JOHNNY: We're very out of place on that soundtrack, but it's okay.

JON: What do you mean? We're a pillar in the hardcore community.

M.A.: This is our culminating question. Why are you a musician?

SOPHIE: Cause it's fun.

JON: It's better than playing – what does Lou Reed say? It's better than Monopoly?

JOHNNY: I wish we could all just get together and play Monopoly instead.

SOPHIE: But Jon hates games, so we can't.

JOHNNY: [to Jon] Oh yeah, you hate games. So that's true for you, anything's better than Monopoly.

JON: I'm a musician because it's a way to express yourself – it sounds so stupid.

SOPHIE: Do it.

JON: It's a way to express yourself and have an immediate result, because if you play in front of somebody, it's not like you make a painting, and you put it on the wall, and then people go by it and are, like – they either feel something with it, or they don't, or they just walk by it. When you're playing in front of people, you are forced to interact with the art being done there. It's not like a comic or a book or anything where you read it, and it's like, "oh, that's it," or you write it, and it's over with. It's, like, you have to go and feel the things you feel, or you have to go and express it. And I think that's – it's unlike any other art form in that way.

JOHNNY: I feel like it's good – no – it's good exercise, is honestly – no, it's fun. I mean, look. It's a good physical – you know, the process of doing it is so fulfilling, I feel like, cause it's physically fulfilling, it's emotionally fulfilling, it's socially fulfilling when you get to do it with other people, that – it's like, even if we're doing it for nobody, or even if I'm just doing it by myself and, like, listening to headphones, playing along in the basement, it feels like, you know, I guess the same way someone would feel good about, like, bench pressing or something, where, physically, I'm expelling a lot of energy, and the more you do it, you get better at it, you know. I mean, also, of course, I love music, and I love the artistic expression.

SOPHIE: Johnny's just a gym bro. I didn't know.

JOHNNY: Well, look, now I'm gonna get fat if I stop drumming, so I need to –

SOPHIE: If you watch Johnny drum, you'll understand. It is a workout.

JOHNNY: I have a demon inside that needs to be unleashed.

NICK: To kind of run off what you were saying, it's something, I guess, euphoric about making something, and you're like, "oh shit, I made this," and then somebody hearing it and being like, "oh, this is cool," and you're like, "oh yeah?" So I think that is – it's, like, the high you get from that. Same thing if you're working out, you get a high from that. So that's why I think –

JOHNNY: All of our sessions are just working out.

JON: Deleter is chasing the dragon.

JOHNNY: Yeah right, we're all just chasing that high.

SOPHIE: I do also think – people differ in this, but for me it's totally different when it's collaborative. What is so exciting to me about being in this band is that – like, to come together and not have anything and to be able to just make something is very very cool. And I don't really do that by myself. It's not that satisfying.

JOHNNY: I agree though. When I think about the songs, and, like, “ah, wow, we came together to make this.”

SOPHIE: We wrote the song.

JOHNNY: It feels collaborative in a very strong way.