

Up D Scoe:
An interview with DUANE, a (lowkey) Detroit Legend

runner

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DUANE (standing) on the set of the “Up D Scoe” visual with his Jit dancers (L-R) Benn, Weapon, and KingL1.

Today is 313 Day. Named after our historical area code, the people of Detroit have celebrated annually on this date long before the city recognized it as an official holiday in 2023. It is a day dedicated to honoring the figures and movements that have contributed to Detroit culture throughout history. Runner Magazine observes 313 Day 2026 with an interview with DUANE, a quiet-kept underground legend that has inhabited a variety of Detroit underground scenes.

Who is DUANE? Many Detroiters in the local independent music scene have followed the creative evolution of Duane Gholston, from his days throughout the 2010's as DUANE: The Teenage Weirdo—performing in a provocative, glam-punk style, combining frantic lofi synths with high-energy, theatrical performances—to DUANE: The Brand New Dog —with, eclectic 90's inspired hip house to DUANE: The Jet Black Eel, a 70's glam rock inspired full live band act which he characterized as his “first truly conceptual project,” with performances focusing on Americana, homophobia, and systematic racism through the lens of a queer person of color. Gholston continues to bring theater and activism to the nightlife landscape under the simplified moniker, DUANE, with live shows of him rapping over original Ghattotech beats, supported by a crew of dancers from the Detroit Jit Masters collective. DUANE's EP recent single, *Up D Scoe*, brings pop song writing, alternative and dark industrial aesthetics together, reiterating the range of influence that has defined his work for years.

Runner Magazine: DUANE, It is an honor to interview you for 313 Day. You are a Detroit native who grew up on the West Side and graduated from the Detroit High School for the Fine and Performing Arts. Like many who attended that school, your career as an artist started early on, and has consistently evolved over many years. How do you think that specific school prepared you to carve your own unique path as an artist?

DUANE: I was an art major—drawing and painting. I took very few music-related classes in school. The space felt very much like a “stick to the status quo” type of atmosphere. Ya know, like in High School Musical? Whenever I did tell people I was making music or entering one of the school talent shows, it was always shocking. I was more so known for my wild outfits and being the weird art kid. It did give me the circumstances to make my own platform for my vision and ideas. Always the rebel trying to be seen and heard.

RM: Over the course of your career thus far, you have taken on a variety of monikers, with each one representing a slight change in direction. What usually causes you to reach the point where you decide to make these changes a reality?

D: Whatever I feel like doing, I do it. It's very much a concise thing; I look up to Bowie and Madonna the most. How they wear their inspirations so proudly on their sleeves. How they curate themselves based on external sources that they admire, collect, and want to show off.

RM: You're in your 15th year as a Detroit-based music producer and performer. Even from early on, you have brought such a unique presence to the scene. Could you go into how the underground scenes of Detroit have shaped your work?

D: No comment. I've drifted in and out of doing music over the years. I'd rather not think about time. Something I'm borrowing from Mariah.

RM: What are some projects you are currently working on?

D: My main current focus is developing the best live show and getting all these wonderfully talented DJs to like and play my stuff. I'm very self-critical and particular about how my work best reflects me and my current state.

RM: How do these current projects echo the work you have done previously? And how do they inform your future trajectory as an artist?

D: Everything is always primarily by me. I feel in the past it was to my own detriment. The control still remains. But now, it's getting better results because I am collaborating with others and seeking other opinions on mixing, recording, and sampling other producers' works. I don't feel the need to be such a loner trying to do it all myself.

RM: Can you talk a little bit about your participation in activist efforts around town and how you weave that into your music and performances?

D: I'm very much into community organizing and voter engagement. I love hearing people's differing opinions on subjects and encouraging them to express themselves and take part in civic life. There is so much opportunity to get involved and have a say in Detroit. I feel like people miss out. My latest track, "D Ma-noogian Jit," directly references the power that Detroiters have to make positive change for themselves, yet don't fully tap into. Myself included. I'm not doing enough. We all could do more.

RM: Can you describe what Ghattotech is and what you are doing to carry it into the future?

D: It's a controversial term. I know some don't like it. DJ Assault himself said at a recent show I attended that he "doesn't know what that is" and that he makes "booty music." Some could see it as having a negative racially charged connotation to it. As for me, I see it as a more rough, informal take on an already Black form of music (techno) embracing the fun, raunchy, no-frills attitude of the hood. No matter the color.

RM: Can you describe what JIT is? How long have you been working with JIT Masters?

D: So my dance crew, who I've been working with since November 2025, comprises members from the Jit Masters, but officially I have no affiliation with them myself, just to be clear. They performed as the A-List Jit Crew when on stage with me. But, as of now, they're figuring out how they want to be addressed/credited. As far as what the dance is, it's a very fast-paced, aerodynamic, pose-holding, footwork dance. I like working with them and getting a peek into what the competitive culture of their scene is like. I want to do what Madonna did with Vogue dancers, but with me and Jit.

RM: What are some of your favorite venues to perform at in Detroit?

D: I'm just now getting back into performing on stages again more regularly. I don't have a fave venue. I say anywhere with a cordless mic, good sound, and enough space to dance. But we'll make it work anywhere. We'll use the floor if we have to.

RM: Who or what are some of your main influences in your work?

D: Madonna. David Bowie. Britney Spears. Prince. DJ Assault. DJ Maaco/ Detroit-In-Effect. So many. But those are the main ones on my brain the most lately.

RM: Can you share some of your favorite places in Detroit?

D: Old Redford area. Artist Village venue. The Redford Theatre. Sweet Potato Sensations cafe. An African restaurant called Maty's. All on Grand River and Lahser. Deep West Side hood area. Where my family has been since 2005.

RM: Can you share the most impactful experience you had that shaped who you are today?

D: Most impactful on me at this very moment? Probably seeing Britney Spears on TV and hearing booty music played loud from neighbors' house parties. My earliest music memories. Both were the same year: 1999.

RM: Anything else you want to say to the audience?

D: Stream and download my music and tell your fave bar/club to book me!

Up D Scoe (Official Music Video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znhON4V1UGg>

Bandcamp: <https://duanethedetroitartist.bandcamp.com/album/d313-made-in-detroit-ep>

Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/DUANEDETROITARTIST>

Booking inquiries: nicholasgcalderon@gmail.com (DUANE + Jitters live show)

Image by Christopher Jarvis

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