

Mary Gauthier – Bio

Mary Gauthier was born in St. Vincent's Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana, circa March 1962, and was immediately abandoned by her mother. Adopted at the age of nine months, she was raised by Catholic foster parents in the town of Thibodaux, Louisiana. Aged fifteen she dropped out of high school, stole the family car and took to the road, a truly wild child. Frequenting the gay bars and strip joints in Baton Rouge she succumbed to a dependency on alcohol and drugs. Aged sixteen Gauthier was a patient in a Baton Rouge detox unit, and spent her 18th birthday in a Kansas City jail cell. Gauthier's late teen years were filled with a cycle of being returned home and running away again.

In 1991, she overcame her substance dependency and enrolled as a philosophy major at Louisiana State University and then attended Cambridge School of Culinary Arts. Following graduation she opened the Dixie Chicken, a Cajun restaurant located in Boston's Back Bay. Although the restaurant became a success, Gauthier harboured dreams of becoming a professional musician having played guitar from an early age. Commenting on her lifelong interest in music, Gauthier told an interviewer *"I'm from the South, and that's the way I hear music. I grew up on AM radio down there and it was all country -- Hank Williams Sr., Loretta Lynn, Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash. My parents despised it. They thought those people needed an education. They were into classical music, Neil Diamond, show tunes, that kind of stuff, and it got on their nerves when I put country music on. I also liked offshoots of country like John Prine."*

In 1996 Mary began performing at open mics. in Boston's acoustic venues. Enlisting the help of Crit Harmon, in 1997 Gauthier self-released her debut CD, appropriately titled **"Dixie Chicken."** The album earned the budding musician a Boston Music Award nomination for Outstanding New Contemporary Folk Act. The following year Mary decided to sell her restaurant, retained Crit Harmon as her producer, and went on to record **"Drag Queens In Limousines."** Early in her musical career, one journalist described Gauthier's lyrics as *"Bleak stories from America's underbelly laced with piercing honesty."* One thing is certain, her sophomore album was not only a critical success – it received a four star review in Rolling Stone - it was a commercial one as well, significantly boosting her standing in the Americana market. Released in September 1999, the album subsequently picked up a Silver Star from Crossroads Magazine for Contemporary Folk Solo Act, and a GLAMA for Country Artist of the Year. The disc also received a Boston Music Awards nomination for Outstanding Folk/Acoustic Album of the Year while Harmon was nominated for Producer of the Year.

The track "A Different Kind Of Gone" from **"Drag Queens,"** was included on the first volume of the **"Respond"** compilation released by the Signature Sounds label in 1999. The late Timothy White, Editor-in-Chief of Billboard Magazine, selected the disc as his CD of the Year. In 2001 Mary fulfilled a lifelong dream when she played the main stage at the Newport Folk Festival. These days Gauthier is a major summer festival regular. Her third release **"Filth & Fire"** appeared in July 2002. In the States the disc was released by Signature Sounds, while the Europe version was on Munich Records. In recent years Gauthier has been a guest player on albums by Ray Wylie Hubbard, Jim White and Audrey Auld. Gauthier's fourth album, and her first major label release, appeared in early 2005 on the Lost Highway label. **"Mercy Now"** like **"Filth & Fire"** was recorded at Rootball Studios in Austin and produced by Gurf Morlix.

Discography : **"Dixie Kitchen"** [1997] ; **"Drag Queens In Limousines"** [1999] ; **"Filth & Fire"** [2002] ; **"Mercy Now"** [2005] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 04/05
[610 words]