

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Garrett Hedlund's No-Rules Ride: From Troy to Tulsa King's New York Reckoning

As season four of Tulsa King premieres on Paramount+, the actor who plays Mitch Keller is already filming the show's New York return—and still making the music that runs through the series.

Interview by Paul Salfen · AMFM Magazine



Garrett Hedlund. Photo courtesy of the artist / public still.

Garrett Hedlund is already deep into the next chapter. Season four of Tulsa King premieres tomorrow on Paramount+, and the actor who plays the fair-weathered, music-loving Mitch Keller is already on the streets of New York filming season five, bringing Midwestern mob energy back to the city that exiled Dwight “The General” Manfredi a quarter-century ago.

In an exclusive conversation with AMFM Magazine's Paul Salfen, Hedlund talked about the rare privilege of the job, the Hail Mary leaps that launched his career from a Minnesota farm and an Arizona high-school graduation to Los Angeles and beyond, the music he makes on and off the set, and the six-year-old son who keeps him pointed in the right direction.

THE JOY OF GETTING PAID AT THE TRACKS

Salfen opened by asking if there was a definitive moment on set when Hedlund looked around and thought he gets paid to do this.

“Yeah, I had that feeling yesterday,” Hedlund said. “Not to spoil too much, but for season five here now, we’re already out in New York. And so, you know, getting to be on the streets here, it’s been a little while. But to revert that back to season four... In this season, we end up being out there. At the horse tracks. You know, I’ve only spent money at the horse tracks. I’ve never gotten paid to be at the horse tracks.”

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SLY AND THE LONG GAME

Hedlund has known Sylvester Stallone since his earliest days in Los Angeles. After landing the role of Patroclus in Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy* opposite Brad Pitt, he was set up with trainer Gunnar Peterson. "I walked in and prior to my session, he was training Sly. And we hit it off all the way back then and we bump into each other in the city in Los Angeles every once in a while. He's always been very, very kind to me. He's always taken me under his wing in one regard or another, and it's just beautiful to go on this journey with them."



Sylvester Stallone, Garrett Hedlund as Mitch Keller, and co-star in *Tulsa King*. Photo: Steve Swisher / Paramount+

NO RULES

When Salfen asked what advice he would give people who want to follow in his footsteps, Hedlund was clear.

"There really are no rules. I think that's one of the greatest things about it. There's certainly less rules today of people being able to find exposure than there were when I was coming up. I mean, geez, even IMDb was a rarity around those days of 2002 and 3... These days with social media, it's just like, you just gotta throw a dart and get it out there."

He recalled writing emails to every major manager and agent he could find, introducing himself as an aspiring actor from Arizona seeking representation. "They're like, 'Who is this?' But that's just, you know, that was kind of my proactivity... There are no rules. It was just about sort of getting to Los Angeles. If you want to catch the fox, you got to be in the forest."

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THE HAIL MARY MOMENTS

Salfen's signature question, drawn from his co-host Drew Pearson's own Hall of Fame Hail Mary, asked about the moments Hedlund simply had to go for it.

The first was *Troy*. Fresh out of high school early, he climbed into a Chevy S-10 his mother had bought from an electric company for \$1,500, the truck sporting a purple lightning bolt. He had \$600 saved from working a Christmas tree stand and headed to Los Angeles. Almost immediately he was handed the *Troy* script. "That was the first time something unbelievable had kind of really happened to me in my life. That was a really special moment."

The next was *On the Road*. A longtime fan of Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, Hedlund landed the role of Dean Moriarty in the Walter Salles adaptation produced by Francis Ford Coppola. “Those were the Hail Mary moments.”

THE NEXT RIGHT THING

What keeps him on the right path when the cameras roll?

“It’s quite simple, in a way. I just think about my little man, my son, he’s turning six years old. And he’s my tried and true. You know, for me, it’s about... I just try to be grateful every day. Try to do the next right thing. You know, for myself, for my son, for my passions.”

He had just returned from five weeks in Montana shooting a project that was essentially fly-fishing on the Gallatin River—“soul nourishing, the nectar of life”—before being thrust back into “the guts of Brooklyn” and “gun flinging,” commuting home to his son whenever the schedule allowed. “What keeps me on the old path is choosing the next right thing to do and minimalizing distractions and everything else is copacetic.”

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MUSIC WAITING IN THE WINGS

Salfen noted how happy he was for Hedlund’s new music. Hedlund, who has performed his own singing and playing as Mitch on the series (including covers that later became an EP of Tulsa King tracks from seasons one and two), said more is coming.

“We’ve got plenty more. We’ve been waiting for the right time to put it out. I’ve just kind of been sort of tethered to kind of projects all over the place I’ve been shooting, so I hope there’s a window here soon to be able to get out there and play a lot of this new stuff we’ve been holding onto.”



Garrett Hedlund as Mitch Keller performing on *Tulsa King*. Photo: Paramount+ / public still.

WHAT THE AUDIENCE TAKES AWAY

“I think most people enjoy really just taking away the fact that there’s never a dull within the mischief that these misfits find themselves getting into. And Terence Winter is such a wonderful writer, he never ceases to take us on a new journey. There’s a lot in store for this season. For season four, I’m excited for it to come out. Audiences better hang on.”

BRINGING THE MIDWEST TO NEW YORK

Already filming season five, Hedlund described the move as “a completely new chapter. Bringing Midwestern mobbery to New York... is not only do I think it’s what the fans kind of always wanted, but I think it’s something refreshing for everybody involved to be out here. It brings a spryness to the energy. Everybody’s excited to be here.” The new faces, he said, bring the world back to the Sopranos territory Winter knows so well.

MITCH’S STEADY GROUND

Asked his favorite part of the character, Hedlund didn’t hesitate.

“I think, pardon my language, but I think Mitch has a pretty stable sense of no fucks given. And, you know, he’s always capable... He’s always fair-weathered, doesn’t overreact, takes everything in stride, and I think that’s a nice little base to reside in. Personally.”

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FIND GARRETT HEDLUND

Stream Tulsa King now, exclusively on Paramount+. Season 4 premieres October 16, 2026.

Hedlund’s Tulsa King covers EP and original music available on major streaming platforms.

Interview conducted by Paul Salfen for AMFM Magazine, October 2026.

Paul Salfen is Managing Editor of AMFM Magazine and a veteran interviewer of film, television, music, and sports figures. He is the author of Going For It!, a collection of Hail Mary moments from the artists and athletes he has spent two decades putting on the record.