

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

From Tulsa to Eddie's Attic

*Livi Birch on bringing the faith-and-family hit **Tulsa** to EKKL, turning ten on set with **Lilo & Stitch** party hats, graduating to **Stranger Things** and Prime Video's **Ride or Die** with Hannah Waddingham and Bill Nighy, and taking her original song "Bluebird" to Atlanta's most legendary stage.*

Interview by Paul Salfen · AMFM Magazine

When Livi Birch walked onto the set of *Tulsa*, she was nine years old, carrying the title role of an independent feature film on her shoulders, and about to celebrate her tenth birthday between camera setups. Today, at seventeen, the Atlanta-born actress and singer-songwriter has already lived several creative lifetimes: she has played Alice Creel in Netflix's *Stranger Things*, appeared in D.J. Caruso's *Redeeming Love*, spoken French and traded scenes with Hannah Waddingham, Octavia Spencer, and Bill Nighy as Young Judith in Amazon Prime Video's action-comedy series *Ride or Die*, and built a thriving acoustic presence across Georgia's songwriter circuit.

Yet as *Tulsa* finds a brand-new nationwide home on **EKKL**—the connected faith-and-family streaming and community platform founded by entertainment pioneer Michael Scott alongside Willie and Korie Robertson and Zach Dasher—Birch still talks about that first feature lead with the warmth of someone flipping through a family photo album.

Directed by Scott Pryor and Gloria Stella and inspired by true events, *Tulsa* stars Pryor (a real-life Marine combat veteran) as Tommy Colston, a desperate former Marine and biker battling post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction whose life is upended when a spirited nine-year-old girl named Tulsa (Birch) lands on his doorstep out of the foster-care system, convinced he is her biological father. Reluctant to let anyone into his guarded world, Tommy tries to keep the child at arm's length—until Tulsa's unshakable faith and unconditional love begin breaking through his armor, and tragedy forces him to face his demons and become the father of her dreams. Featuring John Schneider, Nicole Marie Johnson, and Cameron Arnett, the film won the Audience Choice Award at the International Christian Film Festival and played in Regal Cinemas nationwide.

When Paul Salfen caught up with Birch for AMFM Magazine to celebrate *Tulsa*'s arrival on EKKL, he started with the emotional punch the movie delivers—noting that while the characters on screen go through it, audiences go right through it with them.

"Yeah, the audience goes through a lot with this one, for sure," Birch told Salfen.

TURNING TEN IN *LILO & STITCH* PARTY HATS

Even with several years between Birch and that shoot, Salfen pointed out that the memories from a film like *Tulsa* don't leave you. Stepping into a feature lead at age nine meant upending normal childhood routines for more than a month of rehearsals and filming—not counting the audition road it took to win the part.

“No, absolutely not,” Birch said when asked whether those memories ever fade. “I turned ten on set, and I got to meet some amazing people, and I have got some great memories from this one, which I’m really thankful for.”

Asked if there was a single moment where she looked around and knew she was glad she had taken the leap, Birch went straight to July 13—the day she turned ten during production.

“Yeah, it was a month and a bit of my life—we went out and filmed, and also with rehearsals and that kind of thing, and then if you take into account the auditioning time, that’s a whole other thing,” Birch recalled. “But no, I’m very grateful I did it, because it taught me a lot about future projects as well, and I just had a great experience on that set. As I said, I turned ten, and they surprised me on set, too. I came out of the back to go to lunch, and they all were wearing their little party hats, and they had a little *Lilo & Stitch* on it, because that was my favorite movie back then. So I will always remember that moment and having that family relationship with the cast and crew.”

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LOOKING BACK WITH SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD EYES

Playing a child navigating the foster-care system while anchoring an adult co-star through scenes of substance abuse, combat trauma, and spiritual reckoning requires deep instinct at age nine. Salfen asked whether Birch views *Tulsa* differently now that she has grown up a bit.

“Yeah, I think I definitely have a more mature mindset, I guess, because I was nine, ten filming the movie, so I didn’t fully grasp everything,” Birch said. “I grasped it as well as I could. But I think knowing that it portrays so many different facets of hardship—with the PTSD and the alcoholism Scott goes through, as well as the faith-based stuff, and the family relationships that you see *Tulsa* and Tommy Colston have—I think it’s got a bunch of different messages that at least someone can relate to one of those parts, which I think is what makes it a great film.”

As Salfen observed, *Tulsa* looks as if it could have been filmed yesterday, and its message is arriving at the exact right time on the exact right network. Available at ekkl.com and via apps on Apple TV, iPhone, iPad, Android, Android TV, and Fire TV, **EKKL** (pronounced *EK-UHL*, from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning “a gathering of people”) brings together films, series, podcasts, daily devotionals, and community engagement in one family-friendly hub.

“Yes, I definitely agree,” Birch said. “I’ve always loved the film and its message and what it stands for, and so I think it’s relevant in any day and age. But I think having it be available on this great platform on EKKL—and

being on TVs, but also being able to have it in an app, and also have it in a family-friendly setting—I think is a great thing for people to be able to have easy access to it.”

FROM HAWKINS TO HANNAH WADDINGHAM AND BILL NIGHY

The foundation Birch built on *Tulsa* launched a remarkable run across film and television. After *Tulsa*, she played Sarah Stafford in Universal Pictures’ *Redeeming Love* and then joined Season 4 of Netflix’s *Stranger Things* as young Alice Creel—the daughter of Victor Creel and sister to Henry Creel (Vecna) in the 1959 Creel House flashbacks. Most recently, in July 2026, she debuted in Amazon Prime Video’s British action-comedy series *Ride or Die*, playing the teenage version of Hannah Waddingham’s elite assassin Judith Burton alongside Octavia Spencer and Bill Nighy.

“I’ve been able to do a bunch of great things,” Birch told Salfen. “After *Tulsa*, I kind of went on a run, and I did a movie called *Redeeming Love*, and then I did *Stranger Things*, and then of course COVID hit, so then it kind of stilted that. But I’ve had the opportunity to be part of a bunch of amazing things. *Stranger Things* is still kind of—you know, I can’t really believe I’m in it, even though I filmed it. It’s kind of a surreal moment. And then I recently had a series come out on Amazon Prime where I got to play young Hannah Waddingham, which was amazing, and I got to do a British accent because my parents are from England, so that was super fun. And I even spoke some French, which was crazy—had to Duolingo that a bit! But the ability that *Tulsa* gave me, and the base of what I needed to do to be able to be on those sets, was something I’m very happy that I got to do.”

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When Salfen asked what advice she would give to young viewers who look at her career and say, *That’s what I want to do*, Birch spoke candidly about how much grit the work requires.

“Gosh, I’d definitely give them the advice that it’s a lot—it’s a very difficult industry, let alone figuring out a character and that kind of thing,” she said. “But I think if you really, really want to do it, this industry will test you to where you’ll know. Like with me, you audition and you get close, and then maybe you don’t get it, and that’s something you have to get over and that’s something you have to deal with. But then, if you do get that chance to be on a set, it’s so rewarding, and it makes you want to do it even more, and it makes all the ‘nos’ okay, because you’re trying to get to that ‘yes.’ So if I had to give advice to any young actors looking toward it: just make sure it’s something you really want to do and something you really, really love. And if it is, then you just got to keep going and work through everything that this industry faces you with to be able to get that love of the acting that you want.”

A SIX-STRING HAIL MARY AND CHRISTMAS WITH LOVE ACTUALLY

Salfen co-hosts a show with Dallas Cowboys Hall of Famer Drew Pearson—who caught the original Hail Mary—and asked Birch for her own Hail Mary moment when she had to throw it deep and go for it. For Birch, getting into acting at all was an unplanned Hail Mary that started with a guitar.

“Gosh, I think just getting into acting was kind of a Hail Mary for me, because I didn’t plan on it,” Birch said. “I had started with my music. I asked for a guitar at five, and then it kind of grew from there. And I was playing a show for where I took lessons, and people kept coming up to my parents and they were like, ‘Is she acting? Is she with anybody?’ And I loved, from a young age, TV and movies and film, but it never crossed my mind that that would be a possibility for me. So I think the fact that I was kind of thrown into it was a blessing—that people believed that I could do it, because it made me believe that I could do it in myself. And I think from there, I was on *Stranger Things*—that’s a pretty big thing—as well as working with legends like Hannah Waddingham and Bill Nighy and Octavia Spencer, and getting to work with these prolific actors that I’ve looked up to for so long. Anything in that range is in its own world that I still kind of can’t believe has happened.”

Mentioning Bill Nighy prompted a warm side note from Salfen, who called Nighy the sweetest guy in the business every time he sees him. In a British-roots household where *Love Actually* is an annual Christmas tradition, standing on the *Ride or Die* set with Nighy was unforgettable for both Livi and her mom.

“I died—my mom and I died, because we watch *Love Actually* every Christmas!” Birch laughed. “So he was there, and I was like, ‘*He’s here. Play it cool. It’s fine.*’ And then he was one of the sweetest people and one of the most professional, and just amazing to work with. Probably one of the best moments I’ve ever had on a set, working with him.”

“BLUEBIRD,” MADLIFE, AND DREAMING OF EDDIE’S ATTIC

Even as her acting credits have grown, Birch has never put down her guitar. Earlier this month, on October 4, 2026, she played her first official opening slot—supporting Atlanta indie singer-songwriter Emma LaPrade at MadLife Stage & Studios in Woodstock, Georgia—and this December she will play Decatur’s legendary Eddie’s Attic.

“Currently I’m performing at open mics around Atlanta, where I live, and I recently got to open for a small artist called Emma LaPrade at a place called MadLife Studios, which was my first-ever real performance,” Birch told Salfen. “I was so excited, and I played my original songs—I’ve been writing songs since I was six—as well as some covers. And then I’m going to be playing in Eddie’s Attic in December, which is like a dream goal for me, so I’m super excited about that.”

At the center of her live set is a deeply personal original song called “Bluebird,” written during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, that has already moved Atlanta audiences to tears.

“Whenever I play, I have a certain song called ‘Bluebird’ that I wrote ages ago,” Birch shared. “It’s kind of about mental health, and I wrote it during Suicide Awareness Month, and it really touches my heart. I’ve heard from a lot of people in the audience that they really like it, and it has made some people cry—which, you know, is always a win! And so I’m kind of looking at recording that right now, so hopefully I can find a studio where I’d be able to do that and release it, which would be a dream come true.”

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SAFE PLACES AND AN HOUR AND A HALF OF PEACE

When Salfen asked what keeps her on the right path through all of the industry’s highs and lows, Birch pointed to the comfort she has always found in stories and music—including her favorite comfort rewatch, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—and the family motto she hears at home every day.

“As I said before, this industry tests how much you really want it a lot,” Birch said. “And I think just having the memories of being on set, and also knowing that this is something that I really want to do and something that I love—movies and TV shows and music have always been a comfort to me. Whether it’s like, I’ll be sad and I’ll put on my favorite show ever, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—my mom will be like, ‘Oh God, again!’—but having something like that, that’s a safe place for me, and having the possibility of me being in something that’s a safe place for someone else, is something that always drives me. As well as knowing that ‘everything happens for a reason’ is stated a lot in my house—so knowing that it might feel like the end of the world right now, but you will push through and you’ll get through it no matter what.”

That desire to offer viewers a safe harbor is exactly what she hopes families take away when they stream *Tulsa* on EKKL.

“I think I just want people to love this movie as much as I loved making it,” she said. “There’s so many things that we cover, whether it’s PTSD and mental health and alcoholism, as well as faith, as well as the foster-care system. So I think there’s something in there for everyone to relate to. And whether it makes you look at life a little differently, or whether it makes you look at yourself a little differently, or just gives you—I can’t get off the top of my head how long the movie is—like an hour and a half of just peace, that’s fine with me. Then I know nine-year-old me did her job well.”

“She did great,” Salfen told her, before asking what else she has coming up and where fans can follow her next.

“As I said, I had *Ride or Die* come out recently, where I’m young Hannah Waddingham—that’s on Amazon Prime currently,” Birch said. “And then I’m performing at Eddie’s Attic soon, as well as hopefully releasing my song ‘Bluebird.’ So you can follow me on my Instagram, @livibofficial, as well as my TikTok, which is @livi.birch, and then my YouTube, which is just my name, Livi Birch, to keep up with anything that happens. And yeah, hopefully something will come up with the music and the acting soon.”

With a warm thank-you and a promise to cheer her on at every stop, Salfen signed off. Nine-year-old Livi Birch did her job more than well on *Tulsa*—and seventeen-year-old Livi Birch is only getting started.

FIND *TULSA* & LIVI BIRCH

Title: *Tulsa*

Directed by: Scott Pryor & Gloria Stella · **Written by:** Ty DeMartino & Scott Pryor (Story by Scott Pryor & Ty DeMartino)

Produced by: Autumn Bailey-Ford, Scott Pryor, Laura Pryor, Gloria Stella (Pryor Entertainment)

Starring: Scott Pryor (Tommy Colston), Livi Birch (Tulsa), Nicole Marie Johnson, John Schneider, Cameron Arnett

Story: Inspired by true events, *Tulsa* follows Tommy Colston (Scott Pryor), a troubled former Marine and biker struggling with PTSD and addiction, whose life is turned upside down when a spirited nine-year-old girl named Tulsa (Livi Birch) enters his life from the foster-care system believing he is her father. Through Tulsa's unwavering faith, determination, and unconditional love, Tommy is forced to confront his past and fight to become the father of her dreams.

Where to Watch (EKKL): *Tulsa* is streaming now on **EKKL** (ekkl.com), the faith-and-family entertainment and community platform founded by Michael Scott in partnership with Willie and Korie Robertson and Zach Dasher. The EKKL app is available on Apple App Store (iPhone, iPad, Apple TV), Google Play Store (Android phones, tablets, Android TV), and Amazon Fire TV.

Also Streaming & Up Next for Livi Birch: Catch Livi Birch as Young/Teen Judith (opposite Hannah Waddingham, Octavia Spencer, and Bill Nighy) in *Ride or Die* on Amazon Prime Video, as Alice Creel in *Stranger Things* Season 4 on Netflix, and as Sarah Stafford in *Redeeming Love*. Live in concert at **Eddie's Attic** (Decatur/Atlanta, GA) in December 2026.

Follow Livi Birch: Instagram: @livibofficial · TikTok: @livi.birch · YouTube: Livi Birch

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.