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FORMER LIVE MEMBERS TO ED KOWALCZYK: STOP USING LIVE'S NAME

Guitarist Chad Taylor and drummer Chad Gracey, once at odds, have reunited against singer-guitarist in attempt to reclaim band name

By **KORY GROW**
FEBRUARY 20, 2026

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Ed Kowalczyk in 2025.

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Two members of Live posted screenshots of a cease-and-desist letter they issued to original frontman Ed Kowalczyk on Thursday asserting that Kowalczyk is no longer allowed to use the band's name in business operations. "As of Feb. 16, 2026, [Kowalczyk's] rights to use the LIVE brand were revoked by AFU," guitarist Chad Taylor wrote on Instagram, referring to Action Front Unlimited, Inc., which owns Live's trademarks. "I won't fight this in public. The courts will handle it."

Taylor also joined another founding member of the band, drummer Chad Gracey, in reposting the same letter, this time with the words, "Your license is revoked..." superimposed over it. Gracey simply wrote "Revoked" in his message.

The letter is titled, "Re: Formal Notice of Termination and Revocation of Trademark License and All Purported Rights — LIVE Marks — Cease and Desist Demand." It contains a lot of legal wording about agreements and how the owners of Action Front Unlimited are now seeking to enjoin Kowalczyk from using the Live name "in connection with touring, merchandising, recording, advertising, promotion, branding, or any other commercial activity."

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“The assertions contained in the recently circulated ‘cease and desist’ letter from certain former members of LIVE are without merit,” Kowalczyk’s attorney Mitchell Schuster of Meister Seelig & Fein, PLLC, tells *Rolling Stone*. “Ed Kowalczyk has served as the band’s frontman since its founding and remains in that role. The claims made do not alter that reality. We intend to address this matter through the appropriate legal channels and are confident it will be resolved in Ed’s favor in court.”

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Live, whose popularity hit critical mass in 1994 with the singles “Selling the Drama” and “Lightning Crashes,” originally split up in 2009, two decades after they formed in York, Pennsylvania. In 2010, Live’s non-singing members filed a **breach-of-contract lawsuit** against Kowalczyk alleging he’d entered into a publishing deal that they claimed owed them money. In 2012, Taylor, Gracey, and bassist Patrick Dahlheimer sued Kowalczyk via Action Front Unlimited for **trademark infringement**, objecting to the billing “Ed Kowalczyk, formerly of Live”; Kowalczyk countersued. That same year, they reunited, though with singer-guitarist **Chris Shinn** replacing Kowalczyk until the latter’s return in 2016.

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In 2022, Kowalczyk allegedly fired the other musicians, taking control of the band. While Kowalczyk toured as Live, the other musicians fought amongst themselves, with multiple lawsuits filed. The musicians settled their suits last year.

A 2023 [*Rolling Stone* article](#) detailed the band's nasty breakup and the subsequent fallout.

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In May 2025, Gracey posted video of himself performing **"Lakini's Juice"** with Shinn on vocals; the YouTube post said it was mixed by Taylor. Shinn is currently on tour with Dahlheimer playing bass, and **Taylor appeared as a guest** in February. Meanwhile, Live, with Kowalczyk fronting a group of touring musicians, have dates scheduled throughout Canada in February and March.

This article was updated at 3:35 p.m. on Feb. 20 to include a statement from Ed Kowalczyk's lawyer.

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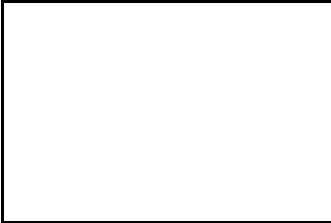
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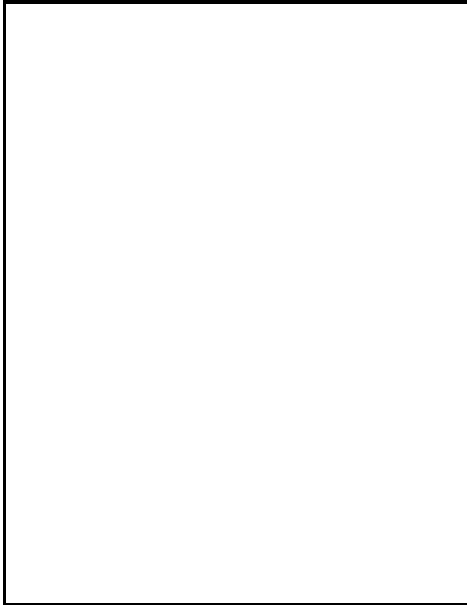
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