

## Sparklehorse Revealed



**ATN recently talked to Sparklehorse leader Mark Linkous about his latest album, *Good Morning Spider*, Southern gothicism, Tom Waits, and his newfound appreciation for grasshoppers.**

By [Gil Kaufman](#)

SAN FRANCISCO

While in London three years ago to open for Radiohead, Sparklehorse leader Mark Linkous accidentally overdosed on prescription pills and passed out in his hotel room. Sprawled in an awkward position, his legs were folded underneath him for some 14 hours. When he awoke it was to the news that not only had he done irreversible damage to the nerves in his legs, but he'd suffered a heart attack as well. What's more, doctors told Linkous' wife that part of one of the singer's legs might have to be amputated.

### Sparklehorse, "Saint Mary"

(45 second excerpt)



When Linkous heard the news, he vowed to kill himself if he ended up losing one of his limbs. Sitting backstage at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall this past March, Linkous can't recall exactly why he made such a vow, though it might have had a little something to do with the pain.

"I would look forward to going into surgery. They'd say, 'In three seconds, you're gonna be out,' and I would look forward to being knocked out because the pain was so bad," Linkous says. "Unless you've experienced pain like that, just constant ... It drives you insane."

What spooked many of Linkous' closest friends about *Good Morning Spider* (the Virginia native's second full-length, released several months ago) is that it comes across like an album from a man who's been given a new lease on life. Which wouldn't be strange at all, were it not for the fact that 15 of the 17 songs were written prior to Linkous' accident.

If this spooks Linkous himself, he doesn't let on. Instead the singer/ songwriter, wearing what appears to be a homemade Mazzy Star T-shirt and faded blue jeans, just taps the ashes from a hand-rolled cigarette into his palm and says, "I know that some of [the songs] were really relevant and hit a little too close to home for people who had the early tapes, especially 'Come On In.'" The funereal dirge features a portion of the child's prayer: "Now I lay me down to sleep/ I pray the Lord my soul to keep/ If I die before I wake/ I pray the Lord my soul to take."

*The lanky singer was second in line for a recent show by fellow iconoclast Tom Waits at SXSW in Austin.*

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[Sparklehorse: Good Morning Spider-cd](#)

In 1995 Sparklehorse released their dizzying debut, *vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot*, the title of which sprang from one of Linkous' dizzying dreams. The Sparklehorse sound is a mixture of Pixies-like punk-pop, atmospheric ballads and field recordings accompanied by a variety of distorted vocals. There's so much going on at once that the band sometimes sounds like a dozen

different artists gathered under a single morose banner. Throw in a Southern gothic feel that Linkous says arose from the mix of beauty and "blood in the ground" that defined his Dixieland upbringing, and you come pretty close to capturing the essence of Sparklehorse.

Linkous recorded *Good Morning Spider* in his backyard studio in Richmond. He put to use any odds and ends, implements and toys he found scattered around the farm. The result is an impressionistic album that veers from aggro punk ("Pig") to lushly orchestrated pop songs ("Sunshine") to straight-ahead, raucous pop ("Happy Man," "Sick of Goodbyes"). A virtual one-man band, Linkous plays nearly every instrument on the album, from guitar and bass to a Toys 'R Us Yakback toy megaphone, a Speak and Spell and microphones he found in a landfill.

By living among the snakes and spiders of rural Virginia and purposefully sabotaging the most commercial tracks on his albums by adding static and other interference, Linkous has effectively removed himself from the music-biz game. That alone could explain why the lanky singer was second in line for a recent show by fellow iconoclast Tom Waits at SXSW in Austin -- which, in any case, is a good place to begin.

### Sparklehorse, Linkous On Tom Waits



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**Addicted To Noise:** I want to start off talking about that Tom Waits show and your being right there waiting in line with everybody else. I thought that was really cool. It seemed like it said a little bit about where you were coming from as a fan of music. You said you worked with Tom and he's going to record on your next album. Was it important for you to be at the front of the line and make sure you got in? What was it about that show, or why were you right there at the front?

**Mark Linkous:** I don't know, because it was assigned seating anyway. It did no good to be first or second in line. I don't know. He's so important to me. His music, when I was ready to just abandon the whole business of music, trying to make a living doing music, him and his music saved me. With his albums starting with *Swordfishtrombones*, *Rain Dogs*, *Frank's Wild Years* and all that. From that time, all I'd heard was *Swordfishtrombones* and *Rain Dogs*.

**Addicted To Noise:** That trilogy of albums he did?



[Sparklehorse \(video excerpt\) \(799k\)](#)

**Linkous:** Well, there was nothing else that interesting going on there at that time. I was in Los Angeles playing with a pop band. We were trying to get signed and I was really disillusioned with the whole business of it and with the music also. Straight pop music was getting really boring.

**Addicted To Noise: What was it about those albums that grabbed you?**

**Linkous:** His records and the Daniel Johnston homemade tapes I got around the same time. And his, I think, just sounded so interesting, so unconventional and imaginative and impressionistic. And Daniel's tapes were raw documentary-style, field recording kind of vibe. I was intrigued by Daniel and Tom's stuff and that kept me from giving up.

**Addicted To Noise: Did it spur you into creating Sparklehorse or moving into that next phase that became Sparklehorse?**

**Linkous:** I moved back to Virginia and didn't really play rock music.

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**Addicted To Noise: When was that?**

**Linkous:** Early '90s, I guess, '92? I started playing acoustic music. I was playing banjo with a bunch of these guys in Richmond, sitting around in the living room learning 300-year-old Irish jigs and reels and medieval songs. We'd just sit around in this room and play, all acoustically. I sort of had this revelation that we would play the music then and it would reverberate through the room and maybe sleep outdoors and maybe reverberate forever in some form or it would just die in the next county or something. And that was all that mattered, that we were doing it right then.

**Addicted To Noise: Was that a change? Had you never heard music like that before?**

**Linkous:** Well, it was just a different way to perceive music in general. Having grown up with instrumental ... old bluegrass music and things like that, I always had a place somewhere in the back of my brain for that sort of thing. But I think it was more just giving up on any desire to be a rock star. I left it and really just started appreciating music in its purest form.

**Addicted To Noise: Did you harbor illusions at some point that you were going to be a rock star?**

**Linkous:** Oh yeah, when I was a kid. That's what I wanted to do, I wanted to be a rock star. My grandmother made me replicas of Jimmy Page's clothes that he wore in "The Song Remains The Same."

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*"I was sitting around in the living room learning 300-year-old Irish jigs and reels and medieval songs."*

**Addicted To Noise: Star-spangled suit?**

**Linkous:** Yeah, with all the mysterious occult symbols on them. But I was never prolific enough a guitar player to learn a lot of Led Zeppelin songs and then punk rock happened and I just delved quickly into that.

**Addicted To Noise: What kind of bands?**

**Linkous:** Punk stuff? I kind of got into Alice Cooper after that. He was my hero for a very long time.

**Addicted To Noise: It's funny that you went from Alice Cooper to Tom Waits. Both characters create an illusion about their music in one way or another.**

**Linkous:** When I was a kid, I was impressionable enough to believe all the stories about Alice Cooper being a superman. He was just a beer-drinking, good old boy. I used to have fits when they'd take me to get my hair cut. They locked me in the car one time and I kicked all the windows out of the car because I didn't want to get my hair cut. They sent me to a child psychiatrist who wanted to know why I hated my parents so much, and I told him I just wanted to have long hair like Alice Cooper.

**Addicted To Noise: Was that an acceptable answer?**

**Linkous:** They let me grow it shoulder-length after that. Then from Alice Cooper into the Buzzcocks and Sex Pistols.

**Sparklehorse, Linkous On Origins Of Band**



**Addicted To Noise:** So you were so determined to be that or have that that you were willing to bust out of your parents' car windows knowing that there were going to be repercussions? Was it that important to you?

**Linkous:** Yeah.

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**Addicted To Noise:** When we were talking before about Tom Waits, you said that he sort of inspired you. What was it about his music, his songs -- and was there a particular song -- or what was it specifically about him that inspired you to make this change and refocus what you were doing with your music?

### Sparklehorse, "Painbirds"

(45 second excerpt)



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**Linkous:** It wasn't really anything that specific about him. I was really intrigued by the anonymity of -- whatever pictures there were of his on the records, they were always kind of fucked up and blurry. That added a lot to the mystique. But mostly the music sounded so fresh and interesting. Especially after living in Los Angeles for two years.

**Addicted To Noise: The Sunset Strip "rock life"...**

**Linkous:** Yeah, I lived right there behind the glam-rock Denny's.

**Addicted To Noise:** Listening to some of his stuff, like "Pig" on the new album, it's got that distorted vibe that he has on a lot of his songs, like a lot of the *Bone Machine* songs. Can you see a parallel between some of the stuff that he does on *Bone Machine* and *Swordfishtrombones* and what you do on songs like "Pig" or some of the other songs that have that distorted vibe on them?

**Sparklehorse, "Sick Of Goodbyes"**

(45 second excerpt)



**Linkous:** Yeah. "Pig" and "Cruel Sun" that's more inspired, I think, more straight punk stuff or Pixies stuff.

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**Addicted To Noise:** I was going to ask you about the Pixies later on. It totally has a Pixies vibe to it.

**Linkous:** Yeah, Frank Black.

**Addicted To Noise:** Was that another band that at some point became important to you or became a real influence on you?

**Linkous:** I got into the Pixies late because I was so into things like Tom Waits and Daniel Johnston. I wasn't really listening to that much mainstream pop. And I think at that time the Pixies were considered fairly mainstream.

**Addicted To Noise:** Although they never really became a pop band like you hear on the radio. When you listened to the Pixies, did you think, 'I can do this' or 'I can make this kind of sound too?' Or was it just, 'That sounds cool, I'd like to see what I can do.'

**Linkous:** Not really. Because I wasn't into it at the time when it was popular. Maybe I appreciated it a little bit more after the fact. Guided By Voices, too, I think that's probably the only real pop that I'm influenced by these days.

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**Sparklehorse, Linkous On Virginia**

**Addicted To Noise:** Guided By Voices?

**Linkous:** Whatever Robert Pollard's doing.

**Addicted To Noise:** Like you do, he's got a sensibility and a real persona. When you listen to his records, it can't be anybody else. I feel that's what Sparklehorse is like too. It can only be your music because there's nothing else that sounds like ... Like when you hear "Hammering the Cramps," it could only have been you.

**Linkous:** That's good. I'm always unhappy that the record company puts out pop singles, for the simple fact that I think they're being lazy and there's nothing really positive that's gonna be ... that it's not healthy to contribute any of my pop songs to the state of modern rock today.

**Addicted To Noise:** Why is that?

**Linkous:** Well, I perceive my pop songs as being straight pop songs. But other people are like, 'You're crazy -- it has its own character.' Other people try to convince me that my pop songs are really original and interesting-sounding. But I think that I would be contributing in a more healthy manner to art and music these days if they put everything behind a song like "Sunshine" and make it a single.

*"The term 'slow' is used more than 'melancholy,' I think, as an excuse for not wanting to push certain songs on my record."*

**Addicted To Noise:** Is that an impossible thing to convince them of?

**Linkous:** It isn't impossible, I guess. I just never demanded in the beginning in my recording contract that I would pick the singles. I don't know how feasible it is for artists to do that these days. I don't think there's any real conspiracy, it's just that nobody wants to stick their necks out and risk losing their jobs to put a bunch of money behind a song that may flop. It's much easier to put out what they think people are gonna buy. I don't think that contributes in a positive way to what music is.

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**Addicted To Noise:** Songs like "Sunshine" have this general sense of melancholy. That's what people might perceive it as. Do you consider yourself to be melancholic? Do you consider them to be that way? Perhaps that's what they're hearing.

### Sparklehorse, "Ghost Of His Smile"

(45 second excerpt)



**Linkous:** Maybe so. The term "slow" is used more than "melancholy," I think, as an excuse for not wanting to push certain songs on my record. A lot of it may seem introspective, but it doesn't really seem melancholy. I meet people who are like suicidal... All the time I meet people who say how much the records have got them through some hard times. So, if it does come across as melancholy or people perceive it to be melancholy or sad, I don't think it's in a bad way or in an unhealthy way.

**Addicted To Noise:** Did they do the same thing for you, do you think? Did they get you through a time that may have been difficult, whether it's the first record or this one? Obviously you had some difficulty before this most recent one.

**Linkous:** Some of them are therapeutic and that's one of the main things that's inspired art for thousands of years.

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[Sparklehorse: shades](#)

### Sparklehorse, "Someday I Will Treat You Good"

(45 second excerpt)



**Addicted To Noise:** Have you ever sat down and said, 'I'm gonna write a song that's a totally happy, mindless, fun pop song'? Have you done that?

**Linkous:** Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise:** Have you actually recorded one?

**Linkous:** Yeah. Well, it's just sort of bitching about the music industry. It's about this faceless character that I call "The Secret Chimp." Those mysterious people who I guess are radio programmers or whatever that control what real people are exposed to, via the radio or media.

**Addicted To Noise:** Is it a new song?

**Linkous:** Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise:** What's it called?

**Linkous:** "Secret Chimp." It sounds like Atari Teenage Riot.

**Addicted To Noise:** Really? And that to you is a happy pop song?

**Linkous:** Yeah, it's just fun.

**Addicted To Noise:** You said you moved from L.A. back to the South. There is sort of a Southern gothic feel to a lot of this stuff. Are you in tune with that part of your background, the gothic sense, that whole feeling about the South having this ominous background and feel to it?

**Linkous:** Not in a real conscious way, but I think innately. Just growing up there [in Virginia] and having left and then returned there, it is kind of a wind that blows into you or something. There's a lot of beauty down there and there's a lot of blood in the ground too.

### Sparklehorse, Linkous On Art As Therapy



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**Addicted To Noise:** Was that something you learned or felt as a child? Can you feel that blood in the ground? Is it around you?

**Linkous:** No, I think I'm more aware of it now. All I wanted to do back then when I was listening to Led Zeppelin and Alice Cooper, I just wanted to escape. Because parts of Virginia that I lived in were so rural there weren't record stores. There weren't even traffic lights. It was deep coal-mining country. It was very isolated.

**Addicted To Noise:** Do you feel like that contributed to the kind of music you make? That sense of isolation from commerce and strip malls.

**Linkous:** Not until now. Now that I've returned home ... When I first came back to Virginia, I laid on the ground and stared at a grasshopper for an hour just because I'd totally forgotten that little things like that existed. And I started reading contemporary Southern authors.

*"There's a lot of beauty down there [in the South] and there's a lot of blood in the ground too."*

**Addicted To Noise: Is there a particular reason you work alone or why it's easier to do most of the stuff on your own?**

**Linkous:** I'm not really sure. I guess part of it is being a perfectionist, not in a technique type of way but in an aesthetic way. As far as sounds and space goes. Plus, I've been in big studios and done albums and when I came back to Virginia ... I met David Lowery out there 'cause I was a big Camper [Van Beethoven] fan. David had just moved to Virginia. He didn't really know anyone so he would come out to my house in the country and bring his 8-track cassette recorder and we would just start recording songs. And he would go away on tour and I eventually learned how to work the recording machine. Out of necessity, not having any effects or just having a bare-bones 8-track -- which was actually a 7-track because one of the channels didn't work -- and even before then, when I was in Los Angeles I was always doing stuff on 4- tracks. I think that's a really good way to learn how to construct music. If you start out with 4-tracks, every track has to matter.

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[Sparklehorse: Chords I've Known-cd](#)

**Addicted To Noise: So you relearned how to do that on your own?**

**Linkous:** Yeah.

### Sparklehorse, "Hammering The Cramps"

(45 second excerpt)



**Addicted To Noise: Do you think that contributed to the fact that a record like this new one, there's so much sound and so much going on? You're playing the Speak and Spell ... You really pack the tracks with a lot of ambient feeling. Is that part of you learning how to do it on your own and learning how to mix all these different things in and having the luxury of time to do that?**

**Linkous:** Yeah, the luxury of time is probably what's mostly responsible for my record sounding interesting. Because I can spend all day searching through the woods for a plowing disc to use for a hi-hat and then spend all day recording it and spend all the next day erasing it.

**Addicted To Noise:** How much of this stuff was done at your studio? How much of it was recorded and written before you went to London and had the accident in '96?

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[Sparklehorse: horse water](#)



**Linkous:** "Sick of Goodbyes." The original recording of "Sick of Goodbyes" and the original version of "Happy Man," "Maria's Little Elbows," "Come On In." Some of the songs were already written but hadn't been recorded. There's only two songs on that record that really have anything to do with my stay in the hospital in London, "Pig" and "Saint Mary."

**Addicted To Noise:** Was it the sort of thing where, even afterwards, you could look back and listen to some of the songs and think about the lyrics and say maybe in retrospect they apply anyway? There's a lot of songs about sunshine. There's that feeling of looking at the sun as if you hadn't seen it in awhile or hadn't seen it ever. You talked about laying in the grass with the grasshopper before, it's almost like seeing the sun for the first time. Did any of that occur to you in retrospect, that those lyrics had more meaning than you had intended?

**Linkous:** I know that some of them were really relevant and hit a little too close to home for some people that had the early tapes, especially "Come On In" and some other songs. My manager and some friends had those tapes and they kind of freaked them out.

**Addicted To Noise:** Why is that?

**Linkous:** Because a lot of those songs, the lyrics were, I don't know ... vaguely precognitive in a way, I guess. They just struck a little too close to home for some people, I think.

*"There's only two songs on that record that really have anything to do with my stay in the hospital in London, 'Pig' and 'Saint Mary.'"*

**Addicted To Noise:** It's sort of like the first four songs on [Nirvana's] *Nevermind* mention guns. It's scary. It's strange how you start to think maybe people know things before they know things. Did it strike you that way at all on any of these songs? Perhaps there was something that you knew without really knowing this was going to happen to you or something might happen to you?

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**Linkous:** I knew I had it coming for a long time. There's been plenty of times where I would have never woken up out of a drug stupor unless I'd have been smoking a cigarette and set the bed on fire, things like that.

**Addicted To Noise:** You had mixed antidepressants and some Valium in the London hotel room -- is that what happened?

**Linkous:** I think so.

**Addicted To Noise:** You'd taken too many?

**Linkous:** I think so. I don't remember, none of it.

**Addicted To Noise:** Had that ever happened to you before, where you'd taken the wrong mix of things? I understand you took Valium because you had jetlag.

**Linkous:** Whatever excuse I came up with at the time.

**Addicted To Noise:** Was it an accidental overdose?

**Linkous:** I think it was, I'm pretty sure it was an accident.

**Addicted To Noise:** Do you remember waking up from it? Do you remember waking up and realizing that something had gone terribly wrong?

**Linkous:** Not until I woke up in the hospital and I had tubes running out of me.

### Sparklehorse, Linkous On Hair Problems



**Addicted To Noise:** Do you remember what your first thought was? Did you think, 'I'm never gonna sing again, I'm never gonna walk again'?

**Linkous:** I didn't know where I was. Because they did surgery on me, I guess, the first day. I was so out of it I didn't really know where I was for the first month or so.

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**Addicted To Noise:** Was there any point at which you thought that you might never sing again or you might never play music again? Or this might affect you in that serious a way, since I assume that music is a very important, integral part of what you do?

### Sparklehorse, "Saturday"

(45 second excerpt)



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**Linkous:** I was terrified that I was going to lose my ... They told my wife that I was gonna lose my legs. I had specific plans ... If I had lost my legs or a foot or something, I was gonna snuff myself, but luckily I didn't.

**Addicted To Noise: Why do you think you would have done that?**

**Linkous:** Well, I was in so much pain. I was on morphine for two years. I just got off of it not long ago. I was in so much pain constantly. I would look so forward to going into surgery and they'd say, 'In three seconds you're gonna be out,' and I would look so forward to just being knocked out because the pain was so bad. Unless you've experienced pain like that, just constant ... it just drives you insane.

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**Sparklehorse, "Most Beautiful Widow In Town"**

(45 second excerpt)

**Addicted To Noise: Did any of that turn into music for you? Were you able to take that pain and redirect it, make something out of it?**

**Linkous:** Yeah. I thought I got lucky and got a private room but actually they had a couple rooms on the ward where they put people they thought were going to croak. It's just about half as big as this room. My wife and the doctors and nurses started putting up cards and letters from people and they had to stop. Because there was no room on the walls anymore for letters from people.

**Addicted To Noise: Fans?**

**Linkous:** Fans and friends' fans, rock stars, everything. Some of the letters were so beautiful and eloquent about the first record, how much it meant to them. I think that really helped me to get my head together. It gave me a lot of strength. It convinced me that I was here to do a little more.

**Addicted To Noise: That must have been a nice feeling for you, to know that you've touched people in such a way that they wanted you to stick around because you were important to them, you added something to their life. You said if you lost your foot, you'd off yourself. In that way, even if you weren't able to convince the record label to put out "Sunshine" as a single, you would have succeeded.**

**Linkous:** Right. I hope so.

**Addicted To Noise: "Saint Mary," you said, was the one where you specifically allude to the accident. Was that directed at the nurses and doctors that helped you? Is that what you're talking about in that song?**

**Linkous:** Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise: Did you write that while you were in the hospital?**

**Linkous:** No, I couldn't write in the hospital, I was so out of it. I couldn't write for quite a while.

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[Sparklehorse: vid01-mg](#)

*"They told my wife that I was gonna lose my legs."*

**Addicted To Noise: Was there a time even after you got out where you thought you might not be able to perform again? Do you still wear the ankle braces?**

**Linkous:** They go up to here [points to mid-shin].

**Addicted To Noise: How long do you have to wear those?**

**Linkous:** I'll always have to wear them.

**Addicted To Noise: Really?**

**Linkous:** Yeah. They had to take my muscles out [points to shin]. These muscles are gone.

**Addicted To Noise: Is it difficult to walk or stand up all the time?**

**Linkous:** Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise: I know you're friends with Vic [Chesnutt] and there was a time you had to perform in a wheelchair, is that**

right?

Linkous: Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise:** Did you ever talk to him about it and ask him how he does it or how it feels or what you could expect? Did you know at that point that you wouldn't always have to be in a wheelchair? Did you think that you might always have to be in a wheelchair?

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[Cooper, Alice: more eyeliner-ecr](#)

### Sparklehorse, "Weird Sisters"

(45 second excerpt)



Linkous: I didn't know. Because I was really lazy about any type of physical rehabilitation. I could just take morphine and sit in my chair and play. It was easy in a way. I wasn't looking forward to that tour. I know I did a Cracker tour in a wheelchair, I can't remember if I did a Radiohead tour or not in a chair. I was really apprehensive about it, especially the Cracker tour, not because of the band but because of their audience. My friend Brian Harvey said, 'Don't worry about it, who's going to boo a guy in a wheelchair.' Then I mentioned it to Vic and he said, 'You fucking wait and see, buddy.'

**Addicted To Noise:** You've got a lot of songs where your vocals are distorted and you use that microphone onstage where your vocals are distorted. Why is that? What is it that you're trying to do or tell people by doing that?

**Linkous:** It's really just a textural thing.

**Addicted To Noise: It's not any apprehension about your voice or anything like that?**

**Linkous:** It used to be when I was recording, I was always intrigued by that sound. Like "Tomorrow Never Knows," the Beatles song, or Velvet's songs. I always liked that texture in vocals and a lot of times I'd use it as an excuse early on because I didn't like the sound of my voice. But now I do it because I like the texture of it. It often makes it sound like the voice is closer to you.

**Addicted To Noise: Tom Waits does it a lot too. His vocals sound like they're really up close to you. There's a lot of nature imagery. We were talking about seeing the grasshopper before. Is that another thing that comes from being back in Virginia? There's pigs, dogs, spiders, animals everywhere.**

**Linkous:** It's just really an unconscious thing. I never realized how many critters were on the record until other people pointed it out to me. Sometimes I think it's more interesting to imagine what animals think.

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[Sparklehorse: vid04-mg](#)



**Addicted To Noise: Tom has a lot of characters like the Eyeball Kid and these weird carny characters in his songs, but it seems like the songs you do are more personal. You're not creating characters, they seem like they're more you. Do you think that's an accurate assessment? Are the characters in your songs more you or are they fictional?**

**Linkous:** I would love to be able to create a narrative like that, like Vic [Chesnutt], he can do that really well. And Tom's just the greatest at it. It reminds me of Charles Bukowski or people like that. I'm just not good at that. It's easier for me to have songs a lot of people would imagine are about a person but they're about a salamander. Like "Waiting For Nothing" is about the last day in the life of a turtle.

**Addicted To Noise: Did Tom give you the tapes back of that song from Austin?**

**Linkous:** No, I was hoping to get it tonight but I think one of his kids is sick or something.

**Addicted To Noise: Oh, really? Do you know what the name of that song is yet?**

**Linkous:** "Bloody Hands."

**Addicted To Noise: You said before that you're real popular in England, that people seem to get it in England. Do you have any sense for why that is? Why it's more acceptable to them or why they seem to understand it a little bit more than American audiences?**

**Linkous:** Basically, I think being a little smarter or more perceptive. I think they just have patience for things that aren't quite as normal. People here, I think, have a little shorter attention span in general.

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[Led Zeppelin: zeppelin-NO](#)

*"Waiting For Nothing" is about the last day in the life of a turtle.*

**Addicted To Noise: You use a lot of unusual 'instruments' on the new album -- Optigan, Speak and Spell -- is that, like the vocals, you trying to get more texture?**

**Linkous:** Yeah. All of that, stuff lying around, seeking it out and experimentation.

**Addicted To Noise: Is that something you picked up from listening to some of these other artist, or something about isolation?**

**Linkous:** Some of it's just being isolated and having to improvise. The one thing I appreciated most about country people was their ability to improvise. A lot of times there's serendipity to be found in the act of improvisation.