

## Remembering Mark Linkous

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This weekend, singer-songwriter [Angela Faye Martin](#) — whom we'll profile with a story in *The Daily Times* [Weekend](#) section — will perform with [Mitch Easter](#) and the [Tim Lee 3](#) at Barley's Taproom in Knoxville's Old City. Martin's most recent album, "*Pictures From Home*," was one of the last studio projects worked on by *Mark Linkous*, the late genius behind the band [Sparklehorse](#) who [committed suicide in Knoxville](#) on March 6.

She spoke at length to us about her association with Linkous, whom she considered a friend and mentor, and about the shock and devastation his death caused. She's adamant up front that she holds no special place in the Sparklehorse solar system; she was just one of the myriad celestial bodies revolving around the bright and burning sun that Linkous was to those who knew him.

"Cheerwines, honeybuns, cigarettes — they were just a part of Mark's self-destructive nature, and I didn't think he was any more depressed than he already was," Martin told us. "I thought that he might succumb to a smoking-related illness that was decades away. I always thought I would lose him that way — I had him on a big brother pedestal, and I don't imagine somebody on that kind of pedestal getting to a point where they would consider suicide to be an option."

Martin remembers an extremely sensitive soul who, when he first came over to her house, nearly burst into tears over a dog he had never met.

"My dog had just died five days before, and while I was talking to him, I told him about it," she said. "He had never been to our home before and had never met the dog, but his eyes literally filled up with tears when I told him. I knew then that I was dealing with a different person than I'd ever know. He was one of the most sensitive people I ever met in my life. He was otherworldly in his sensitivity."

Not that he was a brooding, moping soul who found no joy in the world, she hastened to add. She has plenty of good memories of making her album at Linkous' Static King Studios.

"He was a neat freak, and his studio was unbelievably tidy," she said with a laugh. "He taught me how to be a good housekeeper, which my husband greatly appreciated. He taught me that every object has a home, and that you don't have to keep ugly shit around if you don't want to. You can deface it and make it interesting-looking or just get rid of it.

"He used Lava soap, and he scrubbed anything shiny with steel wool, so that it would look worn and used. He didn't like anything to look new in his studio. I remember when we went over to his house for supper one time, he was doing the dishes for his wife, and I had put him on such a pedestal that I objected to someone like him having to do dishes or take out garbage."

In the end, Linkous' suicide remains a mystery. He left no note, no explanation, no rhyme or reason as to why he shot himself. Like many fans and friends, Martin has her own theories.

"I think a good deal of his deciding to do it was because he thought he was hurting us all, and that because he was imperfect and human that he would continue to hurt the people he loved," she said. "I truly believe he couldn't handle the thought of doing that."

Written by wildsmith

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