

## Red Hot Chili Peppers - Back In The Saddle

"Addicted To Noise" ( 1999) - Gil Kaufman

### LOS ANGELES

Even though they've been given plenty of reasons, the Red Hot Chili Peppers refuse to give up.

Why? Who knows. Maybe a better question is: how have they managed to stay together? Chalk it up to hard work or magic or to the abilities of Californians to constantly reinvent themselves. Then again, maybe the key to their persistence is that they relish a good fight. Maybe artists do thrive on chaos.

Enter chaos: In 1997, singer Anthony Kiedis broke his wrist in a motorcycle accident and suffered a highly publicized drug relapse. In 1995, drummer Chad Smith was also involved in a motorcycle accident. Between 1997 and 1999 the group was forced to cancel a series of live shows due to weather: in one case a severe thunderstorm, in the other a "super" typhoon. Exit Dave Navarro: last spring, the guitarist announced that he was leaving the band to pursue a solo career.

Rather than admit defeat, the remaining bandmembers did the only thing that seemed to make sense. They approached guitarist John Frusciante - who'd contributed to two of the band's most successful albums, Mother's Milk (1989) and Blood Sugar Sex Magik (1991) - and asked him to rejoin the group. He said yes.

During the summer of 1998 the band convened in Flea's garage to begin work on Californication. The Peppers say the album is a love/ hate song about California. And perhaps therein lies the real key to the band's survival: the ability to sustain passion for both the good and the bad.

### **The Interview Addicted To Noise: There's a real unmistakable energy on this album. It has the feeling of a band with a lot to get out of their system. Did it feel that way when you recorded it?**

**Flea:** It was like we had to get it out and boom. We wrote a lot of songs, 30 or 40. It was us in the garage, jamming and hanging out and playing grooves and putting them together until we felt like we had enough songs to go and make a record. It was quick compared to how most rock bands worked and how we have worked. But we did put a lot of time and effort into making them what they are.

**John Frusciante:** It took us writing and playing together for a while to get to the point where it would feel like that. But when we recorded it it definitely felt that way. We were just finished with it before we knew it.

### **Addicted To Noise: Was it a faster process than it's been in the past?**

**Frusciante:** No, it was the same. Blood Sugar we did just as quickly.

**Anthony Kiedis:** It didn't feel like plowing because we spent a lot of time just playing together and writing songs. We practiced from late spring through summer with the idea that when we got into the studio we wanted to know what we were gonna do. When we got into the studio it was a fluid continuation of what we'd been doing.

**Chad Smith:** The songs weren't overworked. We didn't go around and around about them.

### **Addicted To Noise: How long did you spend practicing, rehearsing, coming up with songs?**

**Frusciante:** It happened over a period of about eight months or so. But during that eight months three or four were not spent doing it because Flea left for Australia.

**Kiedis:** Right, but you and I still did some stuff.

**Frusciante:** Yeah. Not songs that ended up on the album. [laughs]

**Kiedis:** There was a sense of excitement that we never lost. I don't think any of us ever dropped the emotional love for what we were doing, even though we took time off. I think we always had our eye on the fact that this was gonna culminate in the studio.

**Frusciante:** All I thought about was being the best guitar player I could be.

### **Addicted To Noise: When you got back together, did you sense that it was gonna work out right away?**

**Kiedis:** I definitely never worried about it or had any doubts or fears, especially from the very first day that we played.

### **Addicted To Noise: Which was when?**

**Kiedis:** It was about a year ago. The very first time we all went into Flea's garage studio and plugged in, it was a very beautiful feeling.

### **Addicted To Noise: What'd you play then? Did you play old stuff?**

**Kiedis:** No, we just played.

**Frusciante:** Yeah, we just jammed. The way we were getting along together as people was the most important element in my being comfortable with being in the band again and knowing that it was gonna work out. We were getting along and speaking to each other. Just the feeling of us hanging out was really great and cool in a way that it had never been before.

### **Addicted To Noise: What was different compared to your first time in the band?**

**Frusciante:** Something about the energies between Flea and Anthony and myself when we were sitting there. It was different. When I was in the band the first time, me and Anthony would hang out a lot. And Flea wouldn't really hang out with us.

**Kiedis:** Socially.

**Frusciante:** Yeah. We didn't have the chemistry. Whereas now we definitely have one feeling of the three of us hanging out together, and another feeling that's me and Flea and ...

**Kiedis:** That's kind of natural with friendships. Friendships go through phases and ebbs and flows and tides and ups and downs.

### **Addicted To Noise: Is it a different band with John back? Does it bring back that initial feeling you had?**

**Flea:** It's the same band that we had before with John, but obviously we've grown as people and musicians. So, the music is different. It's a different time. Especially when we write music the way we do. It's an unstructured thing that relies on emotion and intuition and spirit. The music is a product of what's in the air at the time. With John, we're trying to channel the energy that's all around us. The energy that's around us now is different from the energy that was around us seven years ago.

### **Addicted To Noise: Did you ever think that would be the case again? You've had your share of guitarists. It sounds**

**like Flea initiated John's return to the band.**

Flea: I'd thought about it from time to time, just because I had had such a great relationship with him, musically and otherwise. And after we decided to part ways with Dave ... By the way, we did not fire him, he did not quit. It was just like we threw our hands in the air and decided that this wasn't working. When I asked [Frusciante] to come back, he was so excited. When he got back and started playing, it was thrilling.

**Addicted To Noise: Had you ever felt that things were not exactly where you thought they should be with this band? Being between guitarists ... a spot you've been in before.**

Flea: I never plan on it being one way or another. There's times when it's really great, we're rocking, everything is in full swing, we're having fun. And there's times when it's not happening right now, so it's time to go and do something else. And you can't control it. I can't control lots of things. And that's what's great about this band. It's unpredictable and uncontrollable, and that's what makes it a rock band. Otherwise we'd be a bunch of professional studio musicians getting paid by the hour.

**Addicted To Noise: After Dave left the band, did you know what you were going to do?**

Kiedis: Flea has a great sensitivity and intuition to what's going on and what the possibilities are. I think he had a secret knowledge in his heart that it was very possible to play with John again at the exact same moment that Dave was in the process of leaving. To me, I had never even considered that as a possibility, because John and I were so distant from each other at that time. It was one of those things that was too good to be true. I never expected it to happen because it didn't seem like a possibility.

**Addicted To Noise: So you, Flea, decided on your own to talk to John?**

Flea: No, I spoke to Anthony about it first, and then to Chad. I said, 'Look, I'm thinking about going to feel John out about it.'

**Addicted To Noise: John told me a story about how Anthony came to visit him in the hospital at some point, and how it really touched him. Anthony came to see him because he was at a real low point.**

Flea: Yeah. I think Anthony just cared about him. And I think that Anthony is a compassionate individual and just wanted to go see how he was doing. It had nothing to do with him coming back to the band.

**Addicted To Noise: Was it a personal feeling that you wanted John back, or did you think that John was the best possibility from a professional standpoint?**

Kiedis: That certainly was an ultimate, intangible hope of mine in some weird way. But until Flea voiced it, it didn't seem like a possible reality. Once Flea spoke about it, I thought, 'Well, if he's talking about it, it must be possible.' And it quickly became obvious to me that it was time for that to happen.

Frusciante: The fact that we all of a sudden understood the role that we had played in each other's lives, that the most meaningful, the most powerful thing we had done, we had done together. Our lives since then and without that weren't as meaningful. We also found that we were getting along and we liked each other's company in a way that we hadn't felt for a long time.

**Addicted To Noise: It seems like there have been lots of changes in the band. I don't know if John coming back had anything to do with it, but one of the things that jumps out on the new album is that you're singing very poppy songs. It sounds as though you feel more comfortable with your voice now. Has something changed that made you feel better about singing really melodic pop vocals?**

Kiedis: I didn't think about it. That was just what came to my head based on listening to the music. It was a very unconscious process. I would hear them playing certain chords and parts, and I just listened to what was out there in the air, and started singing what I heard. It was what it was.

Frusciante: Our songs usually start out as jams. And more often than not it's Anthony who records one of these little jams and plays us the tape the next day, and says, 'You know what's great is this.' We play all kinds of grooves and record them on Flea's machine, but we'd never go through the tapes to listen to them to see which of the jams we thought were good. We just never got around to it.

**Addicted To Noise: So Anthony would grab the tapes and ...**

Kiedis: No. There was a DAT machine with thousands of dollars of expensive buttons and lights and things that I barely know how to operate. Then I had a little \$22 hand-held dictator cassette thing in my hand. And I would listen to those tapes in my car after practice. I'd drive around the next morning and just hear things that touched me and that I had ideas for. Sometimes those tapes would sit for a month or more because they were piling up so quick every day. I'd go back and listen to something from two months ago and say, 'Holy shit. This is a beautiful piece of music.'

**Addicted To Noise: Do vocals come to you at that time? Like it's humming along and something comes to you? Or do you have to sit down and work it out?**

Kiedis: First it's something that comes with a hum, and I'll take it to the band and say, 'I have an approach with this song, but it's not really worked out yet.' I'll have a loose sketch in my head of how it should be. Then I have to sit down and spend hours painting in the sketch and figuring out exactly what the poetry is, and exactly what the arrangement for the vocal is.

Frusciante: But the music suggests it to him because he would remember things. He wouldn't always record the ideas he had for sections. He'd hear the section and later hear the same section, and the vocal part would come to him. He's making melodies that, as you can hear, are separate from the music. They're not following any of the instruments. It's its own color on top of it. He was enjoying listening to the music.

**Addicted To Noise: John said you went into the studio and started jamming. Is that how you've always done it?**

Smith: There isn't really just one way that it happens. But with John it's different from working with Dave. We just have such a good time making noise and playing music. We just come to Flea's garage, plug in, start jamming, come up with some great things one day, the next day maybe not so great. So we go on to the next thing. The great thing about playing with John is he's so inspiring that he really inspires the shit out of all of us. And just the jamming situation, it's really a great thing, it's the way the Red Hot Chili Peppers work the best.

Frusciante: Maybe I'll come in with one section that I think would be a good place to start a song. Then if everybody likes the section, and Flea makes up his bass part to it, and Chad makes up the drum part, we talk about what would be a good section to go with it. What if it had something like this, a little chord thing? Or Flea will have something that he wrote the same night that I wrote that goes perfectly with it. Or me and Flea will go off into separate rooms and have a face-off, which is where ...

Kiedis: One of our techniques.

**Addicted To Noise: How does this work?**

**Frusciante:** We first did it on Mother's Milk and [mumbles] Flea used to always win.

**Addicted To Noise: What does it involve?**

**Kiedis:** 'We need a part.'

**Frusciante:** If we need a section for a song. If a song has a verse and a chorus but it needs a bridge, or if a song has a verse and a chorus and a bridge, but we decided the chorus sucks and it needs a new chorus, then me and Flea give each other our meanest look ...

**Kiedis:** Face to face.

**Frusciante:** Face to face. Then we go off ...

**Kiedis:** Grab their instruments.

**Frusciante:** Yeah, we go off into separate rooms and we think for five minutes to try to write the section that the song needs. Then we come back in and Flea plays his and I play mine, and whichever one's better we use for the song.

**Addicted To Noise: So it's sort of like a Wild West showdown.**

**Frusciante:** Yeah, but sometimes you get the thing where both parts are good. Like one part will win, and the other one sounds like it could be a good outro for the song instead of a good chorus. That happens sometimes too.

**Addicted To Noise: What is it about John? The different textures he's come up with on his guitar on this album, what he's doing on "Porcelain," what he's doing on "Easily," are at different ends of the spectrum.**

**Smith:** The thing I notice about John in the studio ... Lots of guys are so concerned that they get their amp sound right, and there's special pedals and all that shit. What you hear is just John's fingers on the strings and whatever sound is in his head. He goes and gets it and it's like he plugs in and he just rocks and it's him. And it's so raw. That's why, to me, he's so great.

**Flea:** At the same time, there are a wide variety of sounds and textures that he goes for. But it's all very spontaneous. And what really makes John so great is his complete body and soul commitment to playing music. All he does and all he wants to do is be the greatest guitar player in the world. And I really think that he is that.

**Frusciante:** I sort of had an image in my head of what I wanted my playing to be like on this album.

**Addicted To Noise: Which was what?**

**Frusciante:** I wanted to play the way people play who invent something original and cool and colorful to do based on the fact that they have limitations technically. Because they developed their style as soon as they learned how to play. I'm talking about people in new wave and punk rock. I wanted every song to sound like that, but like a different person.

**Addicted To Noise: Give me an example.**

**Frusciante:** There's nobody specific. I just wanted to play like that on every song. I didn't want to sound like I was somebody who was totally adept at their instrument. I wanted my playing to have more of the coolness and naivete of these people who get colors in simple ways, as opposed to ways that involve a lot of muscle in your hands. The only muscles that were important for me to develop for the record were in my wrist. There's so many different kinds of muscles. I don't know what dictates from your brain to your wrist which muscles to use when you hit a guitar. Everybody hits it different ways. So every song has a different texture because of the way me and Flea are hitting our instruments. That was another thing I had in my head that I wanted to do. I wanted it to have those changes where every section is a different texture, the way that you have in electronic music but without using electronics.

**Addicted To Noise: Has it always been a process of jamming and finding a song?**

**Flea:** With Dave Navarro we didn't jam as much. It was a different kind of feeling.

**Addicted To Noise: Do you think that created a different kind of sound or a different mood for One Hot Minute?**

**Flea:** Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise: That record was certainly a lot darker and harder-edged in that way, in the way that Dave is.**

**Flea:** I don't know. We had Dave Navarro play guitar on it. He played a lot of guitar on it.

**Addicted To Noise: On "Scar Tissue" I felt like your vocals really crossed over into the pop thing you did on "Under the Bridge." And like that one, the lyrics seem pretty heavy. Tell me a little about that song. What frame of mind were you in, and what were you getting at?**

**Kiedis:** Just to backtrack for a second, John was talking about how each song has such a different flavor, guitar-wise. And there's several different guitars being played on the record. To me, that makes perfect sense for the way we write songs. Because one of the most freeing things about being in this band is that there are no limitations or restrictions as to what type of music we're supposed to play. We can come in one day and play something that's as melancholy and simple-sounding as "Porcelain." And it fits perfectly into our repertoire. Or we can come out and play something that's as dirty-sounding as "I Like Dirt" and that also makes perfect sense. The greatest state of mind to be in when you're writing songs is to know that it doesn't matter what you write, that it all makes sense under the umbrella of this band.

**Addicted To Noise: What does "Scar Tissue" mean to you?**

**Kiedis:** The biggest difference between the way that song came about compared to "Under the Bridge" is "Under the Bridge" was lyrics and a melody before it was a real song. It started with a vocal idea and then John put some chords around it, and it went from there. Whereas with "Scar Tissue," it was something that they were all playing in the garage. As soon as they were playing it, not only did I hear the melody but I heard the words also, in my head.

**Addicted To Noise: How did the words come to you? What did they mean when you heard them?**

**Kiedis:** I didn't even know. They just kind of flew into my head, and it made sense, and it seemed to fit the vibe of the song. So the outline was there. Then I went into my bedroom, which at the time was in Flea's basement, and finished writing the first lyrics.

**Frusciante:** The cool thing about the way we write and why I love hearing the music is that each of us loves what the other does. Since we write each song as a whole band instead of having just one guy writing, the songs are products of the regeneration of love. Because if I don't like a bassline that Flea's playing, I'm not gonna write a good guitar part, and the song's not gonna go anywhere. But if I love the bassline he's playing and then I write a guitar part based on that, and Anthony loves the music that we've written and he writes a vocal to it, the songs have this feeling of that love.

**Addicted To Noise: "Scar Tissue" seems like the kind of song people might identify with the sound of the band prior to the last album. Like I said, that's one of those pop songs.**

**Smith:** Just created a pop song.

**Addicted To Noise: I'm not using it in a derogatory sense.**

**Smith:** That's all right.

**Addicted To Noise: It's just that some people still think of the Freaky Styley, "True Men Don't Kill Coyotes" Peppers. That's what I think of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. But now when I listen to this ... "Porcelain" and "Scar Tissue" are ...**

**Flea:** It's just what came out, what felt good. Maybe it's like if you play a cosmic trip-hop funk jam for a long time, it feels fresh to do something new. And maybe after this, we'll all want to go into something else for the next record. It's just about going with what feels good, you know. And it's not in any sense abandoning anything we've done before because we're gonna go out and rock everything live. But it's just about doing what feels good. It's like when it's been summer for a while, winter feels good.

**Addicted To Noise: Is that part of what has kept this band together? The past few years have been, I imagine, pretty tough. You [Anthony] and Chad had motorcycle accidents and Dave left the band. There was that hurricane in Fuji. It was trying, I imagine.**

**Flea:** It was weird there for a while, the weather thing. Before we played that typhoon, there was some big storm somewhere. We played Japan. Then we played Tibet, and it got hit by lightning. Whenever we geared up to play it was like the gods were thundering down on us and saying 'Fuck you.' Either that or 'Wahoo!,' depending on how you want to look at it.

**Kiedis:** It was actually a typhoon, which they classified as a super typhoon, one step above a typhoon. To me, that was probably one of the highlights of the year. Flea: Yeah, it was really fun. It was hell. I just felt like a great Nordic hero standing on top of a cliff.

**Addicted To Noise: Hair blown back.**

**Flea:** That's what it was like. I was playing and I was leaning all the way forward on my toes, forward to the point where you'd fall down, but it was holding me up. I felt like a real stud. I think my cock grew five inches that day.

**Smith:** Scared the little Japanese.

**Kiedis:** I looked at that natural calamity as a realt and the highlight of an otherwise rather dim year of non-productivity and non-chemistry, which I take a lion's share of the responsibility for. Because I wasn't completely in love with life or myself or being in this band. I went through a psychic doldrums at some point.

**Addicted To Noise: Was any of it drug-related?**

**Kiedis:** Yeah, a lot of it was behind struggling with drugs and somehow thinking that they might have something left for me, which they didn't. It's kind of a tough process to go through discovering something that you already know and that you already know that you already know. But you've got to find out one more time. It was a drag.

**Addicted To Noise: Was it inactivity? Was that part of what drove you back to drugs?**

**Kiedis:** No, it's whatever, my crazy, unstable head. If you can live through something that doesn't end up killing you, it gives you so much more strength and so much more to draw from. And probably some of those psychic doldrumsque periods of my life are what led to writing some of the lyrics that showed up that were like "Scar Tissue." Life can get good again despite all of that psychic and emotional and spiritual scar tissue that you gather along the way.

**Addicted To Noise: Any other songs that you can really see or feel that come out of that dark period?**

**Kiedis:** Probably "Otherside."

**Addicted To Noise: Do you ever get the feeling that the band is cursed? In addition to a lot of guitarists coming through, you've got these weird typhoons, motorcycle accidents, all that stuff. Does it ever feel like, 'What are we doing wrong here?'**

**Kiedis:** No, because the curse has turned out to be a blessing and sometimes the blessing has turned out to be a curse. You never know. Something that seems really horrific and destructive at the time can end up being very fertile and creative at a later time. There's a story about a farmer and his son who live out in the middle of nowhere and they're farming and they're poor. And they just have one horse and they're struggling to make ends meet and their horse runs away. And all the distant farmers in that area come out and go, 'Aw man, I'm really, really sorry that that horse ran away. I know you guys are hurting.' The farmer says, 'It could be good or it could be bad.' The next day the horse comes back. It had made a bunch of wild horse friends while it was out there, and it came back with these other horses. So now they had 10 horses. Everyone from the village came out and said, 'You're the luckiest man I ever met. You've got 10 horses now. That's amazing.' The farmer said, 'It could be good, it could be bad.' The next day the son's trying to break in these wild horses, and he falls off and breaks his leg. And everyone comes around and says, 'You poor bastard. That was your only son. How are you going to make the farm work now?' And the farmer says, 'It could be good, it could be bad.' The next day the country's at war and everybody gets drafted, but the kid can't go because he's got the broken leg.

**Addicted To Noise: So it's a Chili Peppers parable. Was there anything you tried in the studio that you were surprised by? Or something you thought this band had never done before?**

**Frusciante:** To tell you the truth, we were all really excited about Anthony's vocals. I was constantly in a state of amazement about that.

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

**Frusciante:** It just sounded so good. He was singing so different than he ever sounded. He was so confident and sang so good.

**Kiedis:** The other thing is that Rick [Rubin, the producer of Californication] become obsessed late in the game of recording with the idea of doing vocal harmonies. Rick is very adept at figuring out different strengths of the people in the band. And he was well aware that John is a good singer and a good inventor of parts and ideas and harmonies, and how two notes touch each other. So very late, after we thought we were done, he got this wild hair up his ass, probably from his beard, and insisted on staying hours and hours and hours into the night with John, saying, 'OK, this part sounds good but it could be richer.'

**Addicted To Noise: There's stuff like vocalese, barbershop quartet or something. There's all these layers of vocals on a bunch of the songs.**

**Frusciante:** I can see where the harmonies would be for things in my head because I know about chord theory and that kind of thing, so it just comes naturally to me. But I would have never thought of doing it. But Rick would say ... It got to the point where we were doing it for almost every song. He'd play me the section that he wanted me to think of something for, and I'd come up with a vocal part. I tried to make each song be a little different, as far as how the lead vocal interacts with the backing vocal. Sometimes I'd have them say the same thing at the same time, sometimes I'd have the lead vocal go exactly twice as fast as the backing vocal or have two totally separate rhythms.

**Addicted To Noise: Were you happy to do that?**

**Frusciante:** Not really. Not until I heard it back. I would just do it and not even listen to what I'd done. Rick would go, 'That was great!' Rick was excited about what I was doing the whole time.

**Flea:** I think Rick had a lot more faith in John as a singer than you or me.

[laughter]

**Kiedis:** He became obsessive about it.

**Frusciante:** I didn't know what to think. I was just making up the best parts I could, doing as many harmonies and tracks as he wanted me to do, and then moving on the next song.

**Smith:** There's a chemistry that we have -- the four of us, John, Flea, Anthony and Chad -- that's unique. We care about making really good music. We work hard at it. We're hitting a groove right now, and it's very exciting.

**Addicted To Noise: Any trepidation about stepping into the dreaded Chili Peppers guitar spot?**

**Frusciante:** You already asked me that, and you should just drop it. No.

**Addicted To Noise: I think I asked you that last year ...**

**Frusciante:** You think I'm scared of anything like that, dude?

**Kiedis:** It's a perspective that somebody who's very far away from our experience would ...

**Addicted To Noise: You have to understand. From my perspective ...**

**Frusciante:** You've got to understand what I've done to myself in the last six years. I've been the most hardcore drug addict that a person could be. I've been as close to dying as a person could come. I had one-twelfth of the amount of blood in your body that you're supposed to have, and I was continuing to shoot heroin. The blood would go so slow into the needle because I just had no blood in my body. I should have been dead. And I wasn't dead for some reason. So why would I be scared about joining the Chili Peppers?

**Addicted To Noise: I think it comes across that it's part of the mystique of this band that there's a sort of spirituality and brotherly love that you guys have. You talk about it a lot in interviews.**

**Flea:** That's the thing that makes the band go. The truth is, that's the intangible thing that makes the band be what it is. It's not something that can easily be verbulated. [laughs]

**Smith:** There's a word for you. **Flea:** It's what makes the band great. I keep using the same example, and I'll say it again. AC/DC is a good band and everyone knows they're one of the greatest rock bands that ever lived. You could take four of the best musicians in the world and show them how to do the exact same three chords AC/DC uses and the same drumbeats and they could never ever pull it off. They can never sound that good. They can even be into the spirit of it, but they still could never make it sound that good. Why is that? Why can AC/DC do what they do with a few simple chords? It's that magic thing that exists. And it's that magic thing that's the mystery of life and that makes life meaningful. And that's the thing that makes the Chili Peppers what we are. And it's the love and the feelings that we feel. Even when we're not getting along, there's passion there. I'm not easy to get along with.

**Smith:** Boy, that's for sure!

**Addicted To Noise: I can imagine that at points none of you are.**

**Flea:** I'm a real sulky little bastard.

**Smith:** I can be a real asshole too.

**Addicted To Noise: John, why did you leave the band?**

**Frusciante:** We weren't talking to each other. A band should get along, and have fun going out on the road and conquering the world together. That's not what happened with us. We weren't listening to each other onstage. Nobody cared that I was playing my best every night and doing my best to play different every night. Nobody was even listening. They were all so concerned with their own thing, putting as much energy into it as possible that they didn't pay any attention to that. And we weren't talking to each other, me and Anthony. It got to the point where the fact that me and Anthony weren't talking to each other made Flea so miserable that he was angry at me too. Plus he was angry at me because I didn't want to do interviews. I'd gotten to a really peaceful place inside myself when we'd written and recorded Blood Sugar. And it was a real painful thing to go through to feel all the peacefulness that I'd developed inside deteriorate because of this hatred brewing in the band. I went from being the happiest person in the world, when we'd finished recording Blood Sugar, to being miserable when I quit the band. I should have been happy with myself because I'd done something beautiful. But I was just miserable because we weren't getting along. Since I didn't really base anything on how an audience responds, I didn't directly feel a connection with an audience at that time. So the only people that could have made me feel good about what I was doing were the people in the band, but they weren't doing that.

**Addicted To Noise: Tell me how the song "Road Trippin' " came together.**

**Flea:** Anthony and John and I went to Big Sur on a camping trip. We busted out the acoustics and sat around the campfire and wrote it.

**Addicted To Noise: It's a sweet song.**

**Flea:** Yeah, we sat there a couple of hours and wrote it. It was real sweet. We were overwhelmed by the beauty. We went surfing and hung out in the woods. It was just nice.

**Addicted To Noise: "Californication" sounds to me like your rebuke of Hollywood. You're just saying this is all sort of phony, what you see is not necessarily what you get.**

**Kiedis:** No. It's actually as much a love song as it is a poetic commentary on the experience. It talks a lot about how powerful a place this is. It says that the sun may rise in the east, but at least it settles in a finer place. There's a duality of feelings about it. It's not just one thing or another. It's a love song.

**Addicted To Noise: To California?**

**Kiedis:** Yeah.

**Addicted To Noise: You've got the "Celebrity Skin" line in there, then you've got the thing about Cobain.**

**Kiedis:** Yeah. The reference to "celebrity skin" was written before the Hole record ever came out. It has nothing to do with Hole or Courtney or anything in that area. The reason I had that phrase in my head floating around was because of a band that was ...

**Addicted To Noise: An L.A. band, aren't they?**

**Kiedis:** Yeah but that was from 13 years ago. There was a band called Celebrity Skin. I wrote that before the Hole record ever came out. The thing about Cobain was completely separate.

**Addicted To Noise: Did you know him? Were you friends, or did you have an occasion to meet?**

**Kiedis:** Oh, I would just say that I loved him. From what little time I did spend with him, I loved him. But I also love his music and love his spirit and love his eyes and his voice. He had a very strong effect on me emotionally, as a guy and as a musician. The song is just kind of a 'Hello, how are you out there in outer space?' type of reference. And I hope that he's hearing good music.

**RHCPFRANCE - un site redhotchilipeppers ©nicolas 2003**

RHCPFRANCE est un site non officiel sur les RedHotChiliPeppers.

The RHCP and logos are registered trademark and copyright of RedHotChiliPeppers.