

Here's Johnny!

Guitar god Johnny Marr of The Smiths fame kindly agreed to give Louise Wallis an interview

What prompted you to go vegetarian?

Making a record called *Meat Is Murder*, that was nearly 25 years ago. It wouldn't have been right for me to play that song and not be vegetarian.

What do you remember about the process of writing and recording the song with Morrissey?

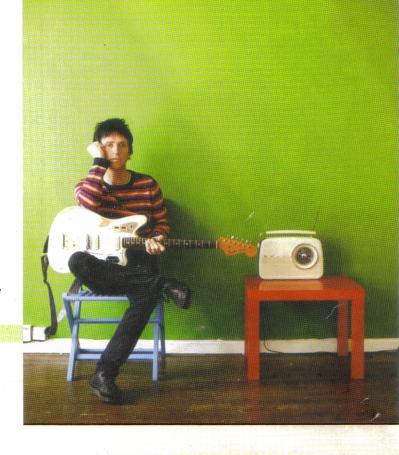
He gave me the title and I went with a feeling. I came up with a tune that I thought was evocative yet unsettling, and the band captured the right mood one winter's afternoon in Liverpool. It felt heavy but strangely beautiful when we did it. Llove that track.

"Giving up things doesn't mean sacrifice or misery to me, I see it as the opposite.

I 'took on' being vegan,
I didn't 'give up' something..."

When did you decide to go vegan, and why?

I became vegan in 2005 when I moved to Portland, Oregon [not 1985 as previously quoted (source *Observer* interview Sunday 19 July 2009)]. I'd been getting more and more health conscious and at that time I wanted to take things as far as I could. I like the idea of progress, and being progressive. Portland has a very liberal and modern attitude and a few of my friends there were vegan. I'm glad I got into it. It's a lot easier being vegan in the US than in Europe, there's more cultural variety there, and therefore choice.



Was the switch easy, and were there any particular foods that you missed?

Giving up things doesn't mean sacrifice or misery to me, I see it as the opposite. I "took on" being vegan, I didn't "give up" something, if you see what I mean. I like doing that. All of these things have made me more focused and energised.

Are your wife Angie and children Nile and Sonny also vegan or veggie?

My family are all vegetarian. Angie was vegetarian when we met, I was fifteen and she was fourteen. She was clued up. I probably would have become vegetarian even without the song I suppose.

What's a typical meal in the Marr household?

Giant salads with lots of tofu. Thai food, pastas, Mediterranean, Mexican, spinach forever. My tour rider looks like the deli in Whole Foods.

How do you manage food-wise when travelling, or on tour?

I try to make time to buy what I can when I can. As I say, the US is easier. I live off health bars, rice, salad and white tea. I hang out in Whole Foods and New Seasons far too much and I load up the bus with lots of stuff.

You recently had a (carnivorous) flower named in your honour at the Chelsea Flower show. Bet you didn't see that one coming?!

I can honestly say that I never imagined I'd have a plant named after me; a guitar, a pair of sneakers, sunglasses...ok, nice...but a plant? It's pretty cool I think; unusual.