

TALES OF THE UNUSUAL

ABOUT THE SONGS

My idea for this album was to write, with my musician collaborators, a collection of songs about unusual adventures, both real and surreal; odd people; and in some cases, ordinary people suddenly overwhelmed by a new emotion of one kind or another.

THE HOLE IN THE MAP

This was written with Russell Ferrante. The story is taken from David Grann's book *The Lost City of Z*, which details the Amazonian explorations of Percy Harrison Fawcett. Because Fawcett disappeared in the jungle in 1925, Russ opens the song with a piano solo that begins like the live underscore for a silent movie, leading into drummer Mike Shapiro's "See-Line Woman" groove. The thing I remember most vividly about the book is the truly horrific descriptions of bugs. I thought the cyanide-squirting millipedes sounded the scariest, but hard to choose.

OFF-THE-GRID GIRL

This was written with Eddie Arkin, and inspired by the website waldronisland.com. There are 172 islands in the San Juan Islands of Washington State. Most of them, including Waldron Island, are not serviced by the ferry. Waldron is also off the grid. The website consists of one paragraph describing it in such a way that any Californians thinking of scooping up some land on the island might think twice. I can't say if it really is a barren spot overrun by Norway rats and rattlesnakes, or the site of a penitentiary; I've never been there.

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

This is another Eddie collaboration, based on the first-ever episode of *The Twilight Zone*. It starred Earl Holliman as a man wandering through a town that has no people in it. At the end you discover that he's an astronaut undergoing an experiment to see how he would endure the loneliness of space. At the session, violinist Charlie Bisharat was warming up and sounded so gorgeous, Eddie and I asked him if he'd play something, whatever he felt like, at the beginning of the track.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

This is taken from the 1995 movie of the same name. Christopher McQuarrie's script is famously complicated and I wouldn't have dreamed of trying to tell the whole story, not to mention giving away the surprise ending. The lyrics are a sketch of what happened in the interview room as Verbal Kint, played by Kevin Spacey, tells his tale. It's kind of a saloon song, written with Russ, and