

# Elliot Smith dead at 34

He just wanted what everyone else wanted

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Singer/songwriter Elliot Smith had the ability to create songs so delicate and brittle they could almost crumble apart before you. From his five solo albums, to his Oscar nominated "Miss Misery," recorded for Gus



Van Sant's "Good Will Hunting" in 1998, his emotionally packed songs of heartbreak and loneliness tugged at your sensitive side while giving fans a connection to his passion for music.

Born Steven Paul Smith, he spent his childhood with his mother in Dallas and lived with his father during high school in Portland, Oregon. Returning to Portland after college, he formed Heatmiser and released three albums before deciding to go solo with a more intimate sound than the heavy wash the band brought.

Smith signed with Kill Rock Stars to release his debut *Roman Candle* and stayed with indie shop until the Oscar fame (and brilliant recording of *Either/Or*) opened up new opportunities and he decided to sign with Dreamworks Records for his critically hailed *XO*.

The last time I spoke with Smith was just before isolating himself in the studio to record his follow-up to 2000's *Figure 8*. He seemed light-hearted and joked about never getting recognized on the street (he actually preferred it so he could have some space).

When I asked him what his future goals were he gracefully said, "I'd like to be in love with somebody. Pretty much the same things that everybody else wants – to be totally alive and not be deadened down by the way things are ... I don't know if I really have any other goals."

Smith was found in his Los Angeles apartment last Tuesday by a live-in-girlfriend and was pronounced dead one hour later – the result of an apparent self-inflicted stab wound to the chest.