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The Comeback Kid: 'Fast' Eddie Clarke seeks redemption

Legendary guitarist revisits the glory days of Fastway
By Peter Lindblad

Just as "Fast" [Eddie Clarke](#) was getting back on his feet in 1982 and putting the ugliness of his shocking departure from Motorhead behind him, fate pulled the rug out from under the guitar great. For months, Clarke and Pete Way, who had then recently walked away from UFO, had been plotting their next move and in doing so, they recruited a talented crew of rock and roll mercenaries for a potential supergroup that aimed to shake up the balance of power in heavy metal.



The Comeback Kid: Eddie Clark

Former Humble Pie drummer Jerry Shirley was already in the fold when they discovered a singer from Ireland with the screeching, switchblade-wielding voice of an angry god in Dave King, who would later go on to front the Emerald Isle-meets-America punks Flogging Molly. The rehearsals had been scintillating. Every piece of the puzzle was in place. Then, just as quickly as it had all come together, something happened that drove the project dubbed Fastway off the rails.

"I'll tell you what, man. It was fantastic," recalls Clarke, talking about those early Fastway sessions. "Of course, we put so much into it, and it was fantastic, and then Pete fucking disappeared! We go to fucking rehearsals, and I'd say, 'Where's Pete?' 'Well, we don't know.' So, I went around the office and I said, 'Where's Pete?' And they said, 'We heard he's going with Ozzy Osbourne.' I said, 'What?' Apparently, Sharon [Osbourne] had offered him a job with Ozzy, 'cause they were doing three [shows at Wembley Stadium] here in London. And they didn't have a bass player, or their bass player couldn't make it or something. So they asked Pete to do it, and Pete agreed. I didn't see him again for seven years."

As is often the case in such matters, the original Fastway was undone by record company entanglements, as Clarke would find out. Years later, the two would reconcile and rehash what had happened. "I was coming out of my flat in London and who was walking along the street with his girlfriend? Pete," recounts Clarke. "I said, 'Pete. It's you.' And we had a cup of tea and a chat and all that. And I mean he's such a lovely bloke."

As Clarke tells it, he invited Way's label, Chrysalis, to the studio to review the demos they'd made. Only Chrysalis never showed. "I mean, it had been three days, and I said, 'Well, what's the problem here?' recounted Clarke. "I said, 'Well, okay. Come to a showcase at the rehearsal room.' They didn't show up. But CBS did show up, and my business guy – because we'd gotten a manager by then, an accountant who was helping me out – he said, they've got Billy Squier's management and Gary Moore, and he said, 'Well, what do you want to do?' I said, 'Well, look. Let's play it this way: The first one with a check on the table, we'll take it.'"

Ready to make a deal, Clarke remembers, "I didn't even care what the amount was. I said, 'The first one who puts their money where their mouth is, they can have the band.' I thought that was fair, you know. Well, CBS bikes over a check and within two hours, there's a check on the table. It's just a down payment, but of course, Chrysalis got to raving and said we're not going to let Pete go."

Try as he might to smooth things over, Clarke couldn't get Chrysalis to cut

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Way loose. "I said, 'How come you're not going to let this go? I've given you every opportunity to sign the band,'" said Clarke. "They said, 'No, no, no. We're not going to let Pete go.' I went up to their offices and said you've got to sort this out. But it really upset Pete." And Clarke believes that is ultimately why he took the Ozzy offer, "... and that was that – which was a tragedy."

Although Fastway went on to record one of the most underrated debut albums in metal history, 1983's hard-charging, bluesy haymaker *Fastway*, and produced six more LPs of varying quality, including 1984's *All Fired Up*, 1986's *Waiting For The Roar* and *The World Waits For You*, 1987's *Trick Or Treat* soundtrack, 1988's *On Target* and 1990's *Bad Bad Girls*, the band's star-crossed first chapter came to an ignominious conclusion as the '90s ushered in the era of grunge. As for Clarke, he often wonders what might have been had Way stayed on.

"I never really got over Pete leaving, 'cause you know, it was our thing," said Clarke. "And so Pete leaving was ... I never really recovered to be honest. I never recovered."

Redemption Songs

In April, Clarke and a revamped Fastway, including vocalist/bassist Toby Jepson, released *Eat Dog Eat*, a tasty, satisfying dish of meat-and-potatoes, no frills hard rock that's a welcome return to form for a band that's been away far too long. Harkening back to the street-tough blues rock, razor-sharp guitars and thumping rhythms of Fastway's eponymous debut album, *Eat Dog Eat* emphasizes a back-to-basics approach that targets and hits the erogenous zones of anyone who fancies old-school, early '70s metal dressed up in frayed denim and leather.

For Clarke, recording *Eat Dog Eat* was a chance to right two wrongs – namely 1988's *On Target* and 1990's *Bad, Bad Girls*, the two records that sullied Fastway's reputation and discouraged Clarke so thoroughly that he avoided stepping foot in a formal recording studio for two decades.

About recording *Eat Dog Eat*, Clarke said, "We went to a studio I used in the late '80s. There were a couple of dodgy Fastway records at the end there, *On Target* and *Bad, Bad Girls*, which actually didn't have much to do with me, but they were done at this studio in Lincolnshire – it's an old chapel. So I revisited that, and I'd forgotten how great it was to set up in the chapel live. And we just started jamming, and I'd just forgotten what a blast it was to be in the studio, to be backed by big monitors and all that. For me, it was the memory of how great recording can be and listening back to it and saying, 'This is great, man' and playing a solo and thinking, 'Wow, wow. I've done it. I love it. That'll do it.' I enjoyed every minute of it, and I can only say, it was the best money I've ever spent in my life."

Feeling vindicated by the lean, mean sonic quality and hard-hitting nature of *Eat Dog Eat*, Clarke had long been troubled by how he'd left things with Fastway all those years ago. "Well, in the '90s, or really the end of the '80s, I was messed up, you know," said Clarke. "The last two, the *On Target* and *Bad, Bad Girls* albums, I wasn't on 'em really. I did a little bit of help with them, but that was it, because I was in a bit of a state. And the guy [Lea Hart, who replaced original Fastway vocalist Dave King] that took over by then – 'cause I'd lost track of it before and I lost track of it again – he kind of took over and sort of just angled it the way he wanted it to go, with keyboards and all that. Of course, for the second album, *Bad Bad Girls*, I was actually in the hospital most of the time, in rehab 'cause I was really ill. I got really ill. I was close to death, and I was really tanking it with the old booze. So I was in rehab for five weeks, and they let me out for one weekend to go up and have a listen to what was going on. But you know, I got back to the old hospital and the album was kind of done without me. And so, when I hit the '90s, I stopped drinking and I had to stop drinking because I was in such a mess, and that takes a little bit of a while to get over."

In recovery, after doing a solo album in 1993 – which featured Lemmy singing on one of the tracks – that fizzled thanks to the rise of Brit-pop in the U.K., Clarke retreated from the public eye, buying a little house in the west of England where he "... just hung out there, just played a bit and just did a little bit of recording at home ... and generally just wasted my time." A call from Lemmy drew him out.

"What happened was, Lemmy called me in about 1999 and we were talking," said Clarke. "And he invited me down to the 25th anniversary of Motorhead and he said, 'Well look, why don't you come down?' And I said, 'Okay, I will.' He said, 'Come to the sound check. We'll work out what we're going to do and all that.' I was really chuffed that Lemmy phoned me, so I went down there and I

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did that, and it kind of started me back up a bit.”

Ready to get back in the saddle, Clarke set about restoring his legacy. The way he went about it speaks to the man's preference for that which is simple and uncomplicated. “So the next few years – I've got a little studio built down here – I started to try to get new equipment in,” said Clarke. “And then about 2005, I'm starting to write a bit of material, I'm working on new stuff. Then the record company asked me if I'd put an anthology together, so I put an anthology together in 2006. And then 2007 came along, and there was the offer of doing some Fastway shows. I mean, I kind of got Lemmy to thank for that because he got me back into believing in myself.”

Still, Clarke wondered if anybody still cared about him or Fastway. Was anybody clamoring for their return? As it turned out, the answer was a resounding “yes.” “If you're gone too long away, you tend to think that everybody's forgotten about you and nobody gives a sh*t,” said Clarke. “But when I got down with Motorhead in Brixton, the crowd went absolutely a-pe-sh*t. They really did, and I was really chuffed. And I thought, ‘Well, hang on, maybe I should be doing some more here’ ... and that made me realize that there were people out there who didn't want me to drop dead just yet.”

Turning the Ignition

Back in 1982, however, Clarke's career, though, was on life support when he split from Motorhead. Upon returning to the U.K. after the divorce, the realization of just how dire his situation was hit Clarke full force. “It was, “Oh, f**k. What am I going to do now?”” said Clarke. “I was heartbroken to be honest. We had a bit of a set-to, but I never ever imagined that I wouldn't be in Motorhead. I thought we were there for life. And it's funny how circumstances ... they rally against you. Suddenly, you've got all these things going on that dictate the way things are going, and you just couldn't even imagine that it would go that way. It wasn't even on the menu, me leaving the band. But, one row and then another and they didn't want me in the band anymore, and when I said, ‘Look, let's carry on.’ They told me to f**k off. You know, ‘We don't want you anymore,’ and I came back to England on the next plane over. And I remember tottering down the streets with half a bottle of vodka in me pocket, thinking, ‘What am I going to do now?’”

Complicating matters was the fact that Clarke and the rest of Motorhead lived in the same house in England. So, he had to move out. With no place to live and none of his equipment, which was still with the band in America, Clarke felt a bit lost. He also had no money to speak of. “I've got no money, because we never got any money in those days,” said Clarke. “We never really got paid, you know. A couple hundred well, you know, \$250 a week, but ... well, you don't really need a lot when you're on the road and everything's paid for. You don't kick up a stink. So I was poor, and they were very difficult times. And of course, we were huge here. We were Motorhead. So, it was a bit weird really. We had #1 albums and songs out ... no money of course, because managers don't like giving you money (laughs). They keep you under the yolk, you know.”

There was someone who understood all too well what was happening to Clarke. It was Way, who was undergoing a separation from his band, UFO. Somebody decided to play matchmaker. “I got a call from somebody at the Motorhead office in London, somebody who obviously felt a bit sorry for me or whatever,” said Clarke. “And it came out of the blue, and I said, ‘What's this? I didn't expect to hear from you.’ They said, ‘We just thought we'd let you know that Pete Way has left UFO and would you like to get together with him?’ And I thought, ‘Hey, I've got nothing going on here.’ I said, ‘Yeah, cool.’”

Previously, the only contact Clarke and Way had ever had was in the pubs. “I mean, I knew Pete a little bit, but only from being drunk together in the Marquee [the venerable London concert venue],” said Clarke. “We'd never had much to say, but ... ‘Hey, do you wanna have a drink?’ ‘Fantastic.’ (laughs) So, I didn't really know Pete. I knew he was a nice guy, but that was all. But we got together, and we hit it off right away because we both liked to drink. I had a drinking problem. He had a drinking problem. We had our drinking problems together, and it was a lot of fun. I think we were both relieved that we found someone who was in the same position.”

With Clarke on guitar and Way on bass, the budding partnership began laying the foundation for what would become Fastway by finding a rehearsal space ... and a new friend. “That's when we met Topper,” said Clarke, referring to Topper Headon, drummer for punk heroes The Clash.

By way of explanation, Clarke related how he and Way went to find the guy who ran the place where Motorhead once jammed. “Motorhead used to

rehearse at this lovely place, a big old house in Notting Hill. We said, 'Why don't we go there and see if we can strike a deal with the guy?' So we went around there to see the guy and said, 'Can you sign us up for a few rehearsals? I can't pay you immediately, but I can when things pick up.' He said, 'Yeah, no problem.' And who was there? Topper Headon from The Clash, the drummer! And we all got chatting and we had a laugh, and he said, 'My drums are here. Why don't we have a rehearsal?' So, the next day, we all picked up and borrowed a couple of amps that were out the back there, plugged in and off we went. But we had a couple of weeks, and playing with Topper, it was brilliant. It really was fun. We'd all laugh and get pissed and then go back and make some noise."

Though word was getting around that a new supergroup was taking shape, Headon did not sign up for Fastway. He had other obligations. "So, then, of course, Topper did have a few problems with The Clash, and he had a few problems anyway, one thing and another," said Clarke. "So, he said, 'Look guys, I'd love to do it, but I can't really. I'm just not well enough really.'"

No matter, Way and Clarke weren't through taking applications. "By this time, we were doing a few interviews in newspapers and people had gotten wind of it, that this could be the first heavy metal supergroup, with members from UFO and Motorhead," remembered Clarke. "And that's when we sort of decided to advertise; in these interviews, we'd advertise we were looking for drummers. So we used to get all these tapes every day. We'd have about 50 tapes coming in every day ... well, maybe not 50, maybe 20 or 30 in like a carrier bag, you know. Every day these tapes would fly in and Pete and I would listen to them, and all that."

Serendipity would strike again with news of a certain drummer's unexpected availability. "Then, a friend of Pete's said, 'You know, Jerry Shirley's in town' – Jerry, from Humble Pie," said Clarke, who still sings Shirley's praises, saying he's right up there with Led Zeppelin's John Bonham and that "... he used to hit [his drums] like canons."

Continuing with the story, Clarke added, "And I said, 'If we could get Jerry Shirley, wouldn't that just be the biscuit.' He said, 'Well, I'll get you the number.' So we got his number and we made a phone call, and he was about 25 miles out west this way. And we heard he was painting and decorating. So we made the meet with him, and we went down to see him after work. And he comes in the pub all covered in paint, you know. He said, 'Hi guys. Why don't I buy you a drink?' And we said, 'Sure.' (laughs) We sat down and started drinking. We got chatting and he said, 'Well, guys, my drums are in hock at the moment.' I said, 'No problem, we'll get them out. Do you fancy the idea?' He says, 'I love it.' So we sorted his drums out."

Astounded at their luck, Way and Clarke went back to sorting through the tapes to find a singer. Way found two diamonds in the rough.

"Pete comes round my door one morning. He's got a beer in his hand. It is 11 o'clock in the morning and a beer in his hand, you know," said Clarke. "He said, 'I've got two singers who are fantastic, two Robert Plants.' And I said, 'Oh.' So we go down and we put the tapes on, and one of 'em did 'Communication Breakdown' and it was out of this world. But he was in Australia, this guy. So that's how big this got. People were sending us tapes from all over the world, wanting to be in the band. And then he played Dave [King]. And I said, 'Oh, I like this guy,' 'cause he didn't sound so Robert Plant-y. And you could just tell. I said, 'Man, this is the guy.' And Pete said, 'Yeah, he's good, isn't he?' I said, 'Yeah, let's call him.'"

And call him they did, even going so far as to propose sending him a plane ticket to fetch him from his home in Ireland. "So we called him and said, 'Look, can you come over,'" said Clarke. "So we sorted it out and said, 'Look, Davey, we'll get a plane ticket to you and you can come over.' And he said, 'Oh, I'll pay for my own ticket,' and all that. He was real independent. He was only about 20. And the rest is history. We picked him up from the airport, took him to the rehearsal room and said, 'Well, here are a couple of the ideas we got.' And he's singing 'em straight away. And it was like, 'Oh, this is brilliant.' I mean, Jerry, he was an old soldier, and he said, 'Man, this is really going somewhere now.' And it really was. It was like a light came ... we saw the light."

A New Way

Ah, but that light dimmed considerably with Way's confounding exit. Still, Fastway soldiered on, tabbing Charlie McCracken, formerly of Taste, as Way's permanent replacement on bass, although they used session player Mick Feat during the recording of *Fastway*.

On the strength of the snaky, biting single "Say What You Will," *Fastway* won over critics and fans with its tough, no-nonsense attitude and ballsy rock 'n roll

songs that sounded like back-alley knife fights, such as the menacing "Heft!" and the thrilling, nitro-burning opener "Easy Livin'" that brackets *Fastway* with the seductive, Zeppelin-like closer "Far Far from Home," a separate promotional single attached to the first vinyl issue of the LP. These days, Clarke is feeling a bit of déjà vu when it comes to "Say What You Will," a song that coalesced in much the same way as *Eat Dog Eat's* "Leave the Light On."

A swaggering bit of raucous, riff-heavy hard rock that packs a punch and delves deeply into spiritual matters, "Leave the Light on" [for more on the songs from *Eat Dog Eat*, please read "'Fast' Eddie Clarke talks *Fastway's* new record, *Eat Dog Eat*"] was largely unfinished, but the record company wanted 11 tracks, not 10 for *Eat Dog Eat*. "Funny thing is, the first *Fastway* album, if we'd had 11 songs, the one we would have left off would have been ... 'Say What You Will.' Yeah, can you believe that?" exclaimed Clarke.

Hard to believe, though true, the story of how "Say What You Will" almost didn't make *Fastway* is not so unusual in rock history. "Jerry and I, in those days, we didn't like really like 'Say What You Will,'" said Clarke. "We had nine tunes, and we had to write one more. And it was like, 'Oh, bloody hell.' We just didn't have too many ideas in our heads, so we said, 'Why don't do this.' Jerry had a bit of a riff and I got a hold of that, and I said, 'We can't use that. It's moving around a bit.' So we sort of transformed the riff, and then it was like, 'Okay Dave, well look, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll start playing here and you start singing.' (laughs) And then Jerry and the bass player, you keep playing, and then we did it like that. I think it was the simplicity of it that made it such a killer track. But of course, because it had been written like that, we didn't think much of it, because you know what musicians are like. You've got to have it all complicated and it's got to be fancy and all that. So we didn't think much of it. But, of course, to our amazement, it became the biggest track on the radio that year. And like I said, we would have left it off. Of course, we don't know anything. We're musicians. We really are daft, you know."

Off and running again, *Fastway* embarked on a tour that would see McCracken come aboard. Not long after coming off the road, *Fastway* went right back in the studio to record *All Fired Up*. And though it was deemed a success, both critically and commercially, Clarke knew something was missing. "It's got some good spirit on it, but it wasn't really like the first one," said Clarke. "It didn't have the spirit of the first one. To me, albums are all about spirit, and that's why [*Eat Dog Eat*] is so nice. It's got that spirit, you know – that sort of thing where you can't put your finger on what it is."

The lack of proper rest may have had something to do with it. Clarke's troubled personal life also, perhaps, contributed to the flagging energy of *All Fired Up*. "I think the expectation was very high, because the first album had done so well, which always puts you on the back foot," said Clarke. "We had started it in March or so. My mother had died that Christmas, which didn't help and really put a downer on everything. And then of course we'd only gotten back from America on Dec. 15. We needed a bit of time. What record companies didn't seem to understand back then was that you need a bit of space to come back from a six-month tour. You need some time off to re-energize yourself to start writing tunes again. Of course, we went straight into the rehearsal room. The same thing happened with Motorhead with the *Iron Fist* album. They threw us straight into it. They said, 'We need an album next week,' you know. So, you're trying to write songs, but of course, you're trying too hard."

Making matters worse, Clarke feels producer Eddie Kramer, lauded for his work with Jimi Hendrix and other rock legends, didn't give his all in the making of *All Fired Up*, after his excellent work on *Fastway*.

"Then, of course, Eddie Kramer, he didn't come up with the goods the second time with the sounds on the album," Clarke opined. "I thought the sound on the first one was brilliant. I thought the sound on *All Fired Up* was left wanting a bit. I thought Eddie Kramer sold us short on that one. We used the same band, the same studios ... it should have sounded exactly the same as the first one. But it wasn't, you know. It wasn't. He was in a hurry to get back to America. He said, 'Oh man, I can save you some money if we can cut this short by a whole week.' We said, 'Why would we want to do that?'"

Following Kramer's advice, *Fastway* took the short cut. "And then of course, what happened was, we did the album," continued Clarke. "He hurried back to America. Then the record company called me up. I was down fishing in Cornwall. I thought I'd get a bit of fishing in and hang out down there. I got this phone call in the middle of nowhere saying, 'You've got to go back to the U.S. to remix half the album.' And it kind of summed up my feeling about *All Fired Up*. Eddie Kramer sold us short on it. It's just one of those things. And that's why I never used Eddie again. I wouldn't touch him, because I thought he

really let us down. You know, when we remixed the album, I think we went to the Record Plant. And it was fun being in New York, but you know, it had gone down on tape wrong. Whatever we tried to do, I could hear that we weren't actually doing anything to make it any better really."

Whatever his feelings about the record were, the genie was already out of the bottle. *All Fired Up* was a fait accompli, and Clarke couldn't scrap it and start over. "That wasn't an option," said Clarke. "The record company and management were leaning so heavily on us that that wasn't an option. They never gave us that option. And of course, the record company, they don't f**king know. 'Oh, it sounds all right to us.' Of course it didn't sound right. If you thought it did, you wouldn't have dragged me over here to remix half of it. 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, but ...' It was all that. And we got off to a bad start."

In support of *All Fired Up*, Fastway were road warriors, but scattershot planning killed any possible momentum. After backing Iron Maiden and Saxon after the first album, Fastway toured with AC/DC for three months, "... which was fantastic and they really know how to do it." With *All Fired Up*, however, Fastway did a couple of weeks with the Scorpions, a couple of weeks with Rush and a few gigs with Billy Squier and then Ratt. "It was all broken up," said Clarke. "So it was very hard to get any continuity going." According to Clarke, everybody in Fastway was unsatisfied with *All Fired Up*.

"I think we all thought we'd failed with the second record," said Clarke. "And then the sh*t really hit the fan. Jerry went his way. I said I'd never work with Eddie again and that caused problems with Jerry. And one thing led to another, and Dave went back to Ireland then and started playing with his Irish band. And that's when he said, 'Look, why don't you come over here and play with this band?' And like an idiot, I said, 'Okay.' That was another mistake. That's where the third record came from."

That band included musicians from King's first group Stillwood. But with *Waiting for the Roar*, fans waited but the roar would never come. A chance for redemption, however, came to fruition in the form of a soundtrack for the horror movie "Trick or Treat." It was to be King's last dance with Fastway. "That was brilliant, because the third album had failed and Dave was already on his way out," said Clarke. "Him and his Irish band, they wanted to go off and do something that was more Irish sounding group thing than heavy rock. He had started to complain, 'I'm sick of every rock band. I'm sick of every rock thing.' So we had our differences. But when I was off with 'Trick or Treat,' I said, 'I'd love to do it.' So I spoke to the director Charles Martin Smith [who also has acted in 'American Graffiti' and 'The Untouchables'], and he was really up for it. And I said to Dave, 'Well, let's do this.'"

King, however, was reluctant, but Clarke was convincing. "I said, 'Look man, you're going to have to do it.' I said, 'Let's do it as our swan song,' our last thing together, because I discovered the guy for f**k's sake. You know, I wanted to end on a high, rather than the other f**king thing, *Waiting for the Roar*. So we finally agreed. It was hard going, but it's a bit like the track I was telling you about, 'Leave the Light On' or 'Say What You Will,' because it was a little bit strange. It was a little simpler, do you know what I mean? It was a little simpler and of course, I was being directed by Charles Martin Smith. He'd phone me up and say, 'Look, we need a track for this thing,' or 'We need a track for this thing and such and such and such and such – something in that groove, you know that tempo.' So I listened, just to get the groove and the tempo. And then I got an idea or would sit down and write something. But of course it was all simple because Dave wasn't really into embellishing too much. It was all done pretty straightforward. And I thought the album came out fantastic. I really did with *Trick or Treat*.

King, on the other hand, didn't. "Dave hated it. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. He hated it. Oh man, I'm sitting there, we're on our last day of mixing, and I didn't see him after that. He was gone. It was sad really, because I always thought he was me younger brother, you know. We had 10 years between us. I thought we'd been through a lot together, you know. I don't know. I'll never understand this f**king business and singers are very f**king hard work, man."

New Beginnings

At ground zero again after King took almost everybody but Clarke who was left in Fastway and went on to form Q.E.D., Clarke picked up the pieces and teamed up with Hart. By then, however, Clarke's drug and alcohol addictions had taken their toll, and Clarke was incapable of working much. Hart assumed the reins of Fastway and the result was *On Target* and *Bad Bad Girls*.

Fast forward to 2012 and Fastway is back, reloaded with Jepson and drummer Matt E. *Eat Dog Eat* has, at least to Clarke's ears, erased some of the bad

memories of the diminished states both Fastway and Clarke were in near the end. Tracks like the brooding "Fade Out," which blooms into something more sprawling in the supernova choruses, and "Deliver Me," with its sonic crunch, prove that Clarke is on to something, as do the dark acoustic meditation "Dead and Gone" and the driving "Sick as a Dog."

As for what's ahead with Fastway, Clarke is hopeful that the band will make a return to U.S. shores, provided that America will welcome them back.

"At the moment, we've just got to see ... the album's got to do a bit of business before we put any shows on for it," said Clarke. "I'm hoping to get some feedback from America, maybe some offers, maybe we can do a few gigs here or there ... I mean, I've got the guitar. I'm ready to go. I'm waiting, I'm keeping me powder dry at the moment, just going to wait and see what happens ... and we'll see if we get some good news and some positive signs.

Though he admits he's had his day in the sun, Clarke would like Fastway to take off again so Jepson and Matt E. can experience the kind of wide acclaim he once did. That said, one last tour of America would be the icing on the cake for Clarke.

"Hey man, my dream is to strap on the guitar and take it to America one more time," said Clarke. "It meant a lot to me when we were there with Fastway, because we did Fastway in England and we died here. Because of the Motorhead connection, a lot of the fans didn't turn up. And I did think with the end of the tour here ... well my career is over. Then we got a call from America saying, 'Hey man, get over here. F**k, everybody's playing 'Say What You Will' and you're big.' American fans saved my life, so I owe it to them ... I'd love to do it one more time and play in America."

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