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THE ART OF FLYING

1 QUAKER STREET

31ST OCTOBER - 4TH NOVEMBER 2025

INTERVIEW WITH

JIMMY MILLER

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Introduction

DEVIANCE AND FLYING THE CITY

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In this oral history series of conversations with unauthorised, commercial fly-posters (active circa 1973 - 1993) we see corresponding patterns of 'deviant' behaviours and their possible origins. Many of our oldest interviewees were children during post WWII years. Despite the onset of progressive policies leading to the foundation of the NHS, etc., it was a period of social dislocation and trauma. Combatants returning from serving in the military, if they escaped physical injury, were almost certainly affected long term by being psychically brutalised. The coping mechanism of avoiding talking about the war and their distressing experiences led to prolonged anxiety and stymied emotional well-being.

The 'veteran' fly-posters we talked with testified that their early life experiences were significantly affected by the absence of positive father figures. Or by their oft-malign presence exhibiting desensitised behaviours. Undiagnosed parental sufferers from PTSD (not officially recognised until 1980) could be hard-hearted and quick to anger. These veteran fly-posters' experiences of childhood neglect or emotional and physical harshness arguably fostered an anti-authoritarian belligerence. Not in the case of all interviewees, of course, but certainly a significant percentage.

If the trials and tribulations - related to environment, heredity, parental actions, etc., - of early home lives fostered a determined self-reliance (and noting this isn't always a positive) there's another site of socio-personal influence that also failed our interviewees. Many of the fly-posters were excluded or self-excluded from secondary school. One notable exception is the participant who was about to progress to a third year of a microbiology BA in Glasgow when he was hired to drive Scottish comedian Billy Connolly on his pre-fame tours. He didn't complete his degree.

So, opportunities were missed for the normalisation that pervades our society. As G. Gutting notes in his explication of M. Foucault's work, "Normalising judgement [...] There is no escaping it [...] Further, norms define certain modes of behaviour as 'abnormal', which puts them beyond the pale of what is socially acceptable [...] The threat of being judged abnormal constrains us moderns at every turn." And once that line is crossed, if you are aware of being deemed 'other', then societies' inhibitions as to further transgression are less binding. Foucault's ideas about surveillance have, of course, been expanded by pretty much everyone carrying

tracking devices otherwise known as smart phones on their person. (For contemporary fly-posters, however, this is a boon, it means it's easier to record street poster displays and send them to relevant parties.)

We know economic difficulties and pressure to be a provider, i.e. poverty, doesn't automatically breed criminal behaviour, but early life experiences clearly affected our respondents. One of our interviewees was 13 when his father was jailed for handling stolen goods. Time served was less than a year, still the sentence derailed family finances. Stigma and victimisation, by both school pupils and staff, led to prolonged truancy.

Degrees of neglect and financial need caused many fly-posters we spoke with to develop wheeler-dealer tendencies at a young age. Working a milk round aged nine, washing cars at the roadside, teenage involvement in market trading or more informal sales ventures - one interviewee sold pirate merchandise outside football stadia, another bought batches of toys that were seconds, he mended what he could and sold them from Oxford Street shop doorways - all of which examples suggest fly-posters interviewed were instilled with an 'eye for the main chance' at an early age. "If there was a scam and you could get money out of it, you were on it." Another example of this mindset: an interviewee pointing to a densely thriving lilac bush said, "In the old days I'd have harvested that and knocked it out." The niceties of right and wrong didn't pertain, only an uncompromising determination to prevail.

Fly-posting in urban environments was once associated with graffiti and poorly maintained buildings, littering, etc., these symbols of low-level deviance were said to propagate further anti-social behaviour. First proposed in 1982, this 'broken windows theory' was used to justify zero-tolerance policing, meaning that minor infractions were oppressively dealt with. One of our participants reported that while fly-posting he was pulled from his vehicle by police officers, beaten on the back with a baton and dragged on his knees into Stoke Newington police station. The end result? The police, when legally confronted about the unwarranted aggression, asked their victim to 'forget about the matter' and for their part the law would 'turn a blind eye' to his fly-posting in future. Broken windows theory has been debunked, empirical evidence doesn't support a causal link between disorder and increased crime. In fact, an overriding ramification was found to be a disproportionate and heavy-handed targeting of minorities.

Perhaps a more productive lens through which to consider fly-posting is cultural criminology. This is an approach that foregrounds meaning and representation in the consideration of crime, be it a momentary event, subcultural endeavour, or social issue. It brings to the fore symbolic displays of law enforcement, whether this be the post 1990s proliferation of surveillance cameras in cities, the anti-fly-poster architectural features - ribbed surfaces beneath authorised billboard sites, stippling of lampposts and traffic boxes, etc. - or the ubiquitous 'Bill Stickers Will Be Prosecuted' signs.

Systems of belief, individual and collective values, are shaped, relayed and reinforced through media, popular culture as well as everyday experiences. Print and lens-based media have often sensationalised fly-posting as a lowly, thuggish and criminal activity - even the punctilious and socially critical film maker Mike Leigh did little to counter such a bald characterisation in his film 1993 Naked where a fly-poster is seen assaulting the main character and driving off with their belongings - and this perhaps fosters a 'nobody likes us, we don't care' attitude among fly-posters that contributes to, at the very least, an ambivalence regarding certain social norms.

Cultural criminologist Jeff Ferrell's emphasises daily existence as an essential albeit mundane arena of criminality and control worthy of consideration. Perhaps even more relevant to our interviewee's lives' 'on the brush', Ferrell's perspective highlights "[T]he currents of carnivalesque excitement, pleasure, and risk-taking that animate everyday life.' There's no small degree of pleasure in opening up new sites on routes through a city, producing space, tending it and, to all intents and purposes, coming to 'own' it. And deviance, of course, can be constructive. Many council authorised posting sites around the country started life as illegitimate displays.

The transcripts of fly-posters' testimonies are detailed, informative, jocular, moving and entertaining from very many points of view but perhaps especially when considering the political economy of crime. That is to bear in mind it's the policies, the laws and institutions that shape views of deviance. The fly-posters' experiences raise questions about types of law enforcement, relations between the police and communities, how and for whose benefit the criminal justice system is structured as well as the consequences and goals of punishment. While some may have started this illegal activity via a chance occurrence (it's not a job

that's publicly advertised) for others it wasn't a failure to see or pursue legitimate opportunities into employment. It was a choice, they saw an entrepreneurial opportunity. Whatever the point of entry, life experiences equipped the fly-posters with a mindset that abjures both legal and social norms so as to produce new space in the city.

ADRIAN BURNHAM

BEGINS

9TH SEPT, 2023
1.00PM - 2.35PM

VENUE

Vittoria Café
Leith Walk
Edinburgh EH7 5HR

PRESENT

Jimmy Miller
Richard Broadbent
Adrian Burnham

Interview one with JIMMY MILLER

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JM How I first met Build Hollywood?¹ Or 'Don't get me started!'. I reckon it was about 1986. And it was the squatting community in Coldharbour Lane, Camberwell, Brixton area. And I first met quite a few of them all at once, at one time, Jane, Wendy, Adrian... Paul, there was Gill, Andy, Andrew... There was a whole bunch of them anyway, all at once. And we met them and we were invited to a party. I think Tim was at that party. You were there...

And you were building up to do 'The Rules of Comedy', you hadn't quite filmed it... Yeah, and we were at this party, and you were filming, and then I realised, you know, they're making films. And not only that, they were doing it from nothing, from scratch, you know, like beg, steal and borrow kind of type thing to make the films. Yeah, it was quite interesting. And then I remember seeing the film. And was quite surprised 'cos it was a musical as well. And I thought, what's going on here? We were all sort of hanging about just socially a lot. And then, the next film, 'Morello Jelly'. Cherry? Cherry, sorry. It was about jam though wasn't it? It was about glass and jam and supermarkets. There was all kinds of things going on really. But, I remember helping to do things, and shift things around. But it wasn't really posters then, but I remember there was the poster thing bubbling. And then, of course, there was also Gary, Maxine's partner, Gary Buckett.

Anyway, it was all films, and then the posters started. I remember I was in Brixton, down towards the end of Coldharbour Lane, there was some pillars there. And we were doing a gig, you know, I was into that then. Well, still am really but we were playing gigs and I posted, I'd got a photocopy, it was probably an A3. Well, I plastered these pillars with it all neatly. And it seemed to have attracted the attention of Tim. And basically, a couple of days later, I've come down and they're all covered in DCs.² All our posters. And it was Gary, you know. I started the site and fucking Gary stole it. And then he told me, 'Look, this is how it works...' and I was like, okay, it doesn't matter. It was just a token thing.

Then Tim asked me about posters and I was like, 'No'. You know, I was working on building [jobs] then. It just didn't seem like a real job. And then, in 1992, in July, we came up here, with the understanding of, do you want to help us

¹ Build Hollywood & Film It' was the name of a community arts, theatre and film project active circa 1986/7 -1990.
² Double Crown - an Imperial vertical poster size (H30 X W20 inches)

with the festival?³ And I remember coming up. Actually, I was working in London, but I had a place here, with Wendy at the time but I was away a lot working in London. And it was good money, probably the best money I'd ever earned on that particular building job. We were working at like Sting's house in Wiltshire, it was all that, you know. And we were getting really good money. And we had to sign a, when you were in the houses and stuff, everything had to be confidential.

So, anyway, I was still working when I came up. And Tim said meet us in Academy Street, so I went down to Academy Street, and I just walked in the yard.⁴ And Myles was the only person there. So that was the first time I met Myles.

And I said, hi, alright, is Tim there? And then 'cos I my accent he said, oh you must be that Scouse guy Tim was talking about. I said, yeah. And he said, he's not here, he's been delayed or whatever it was. And then about half an hour later Eddie Garrity walked in.⁵ And, he kinda looked me up and down, and then said, oh, you'd be that Scouser then? Have you done this before. And I said, no. And he went, actually I've just been around the round, I'll show yer. So, within 45 minutes, I was in the van with Eddie, and he took me round, pointing things out and says, this is what we do. And I was like, okay.

He can be quite quiet at times, Eddie. In those days he was reserved, that's right, he was always somewhere else. And he never said much. You know, and I'm asking questions, and he's giving the most limited answers, sort of thing. So, we got back to the yard and when we got there Tim was there. And he said, if you can come back tomorrow Richard's coming up, you can go out with him. So, the next day you took me, I remember the place exactly, it was Tollcross, right and it was a wall. And it had like 3 sixty-forties on it.⁶ And you put one up, and you explained, and said, go on, have a go then. And then you said, it's easy isn't it? And I went, yeah. And that was it.

We had that couple of months really. I remember we started the biggest site that ever existed on Greenside Place at four in the morning. Yeah, there was loads of us there. That lasted for years actually, I ended up on that for a long time. And there was a guy called Mr Mad, the site manager, yeah, yeah, he was cartoon like. He was like one of those old adverts, you know, 'follow the country code'. He used to stand there like that with like steam coming out of his ears. And he used to come right up and kinda put his, but he never touched you. He'd scream at you and everything. So, we used to try and avoid him, but it was almost like he'd spend his life trying to catch us, but nothing would happen.

So, what happened then was we met Bruce, and he had the dog, little Jack Russell, and a guy called Nichol. And they were a team really, they were together. Myles had just started with them. Literally, for the festival, he'd got them a couple of weeks before. So, I ended up going out with them, for the whole festival really. On three shifts, I remember, used to do three shifts, checking the fly and everything. So, the festival ended, and Tim said to me, would you stay on for a couple more months? I'm starting to get more involved with Myles. And I said, yeah, okay. So, I stayed on, and then everything went a bit weird with, you know who, and to the point where I had to leave. The police were after me basically. So, I had to go back to London. And I was back in London, for about a month, and then through the grapevine, I was back in Loughborough Road in Brixton, and I think through everything Tim found out. And one day he knocked on the door. I opened the door and he's standing there saying, do you want some work. And I went, alright. And that's quite a few, almost 30 years ago. And then, I said I'll do it for a few months. And you were doing a round in North London, Hornsey, and all that, Tottenham, Highbury, blah, blah, blah.

And initially I went with a guy called Mark French. So, I was just with him, going around Soho, Hammersmith, those areas, during the day. It was like a day run, erm, you know. Mark French was, he's a defence lawyer now. In fact, he was coming up to, you know, he was qualifying. So, it was funny he was doing his, he was still studying. So, I was with him for months and months, quite a long time. And then [to RB], you moved here, and before you moved here you showed me your round, again, you know what I mean? This is back in the early 90s, you showed me round the North London run. So, I took ever your round, you came here...

RB I came back from Vietnam and it had all gone wrong so I said to Tim, can I have a job again? And he said, can you go to Scotland 'cos nobody really wants to go. Wee Robbie was here, wasn't he? And Martin.

JM Martin McFly, yeah. He was from quite a big family, from Kirkcaldy, in Fife, right down the end of Fife. [...] But,

3 Original fly-posting company Diabolical Liberties joined forces with Myles Cooney (Scottish fly-poster extraordinaire) to fly-post the Edinburgh International Festival.

4 The fly-posting HQ and yard in Leith, Edinburgh.

5 Eddie Garrity/Edweena Banger (b.1959 - d.2025) fly-poster and former member of bands, The Nosebleeds and Slaughter and the Dogs.

6 'Sixty-Forties' ref. '4 Sheet' poster size, 60 inches high by 40 inches wide, a standard street poster size.

anyway, I started covering your round in North London, you came here. And I did that for a while, quite a few years. And then Tim wanted me back on the day thing.

Also, in between that, I had lots of things had happened, you know. Like, I got beat up by the police. In Stoke Newington...⁷ It was bizarre. So, in the middle of the night. Especially when I, I started Hackney off from scratch. So, I stopped in North London and started Hackney, East London, Dalston, all that, Stoke Newington. And I literally started it all from scratch. And I'd do it in the middle of the night. And basically, this policeman used to, there was a plain clothes policeman, there was like loads of prostitutes, and crack, even then, you know. The creatures of the night, you know.

So, this policeman used to turn up, it was funny actually because I think it was wintertime anyway, but he used to have one of those macs, you know, them old macs, ridiculous looking thing, right and he had a beard, and an obvious South Welsh accent. And he'd turn up, and he'd have these boys with him, and they all had, I swear to God they weren't truncheons, they were like small baseball bats, right, this is the police! And they were all young thugs, they were all quite young, and they were always chomping, you know. And he'd say, how many times have I gotta tell you? And I said, look, it's only posters. And he said, the council don't want it. Blah, blah. And he said, how many times... And, as you did, I just sort of carried on.

And then one day, there was a one-way system that came round literally to Stoke Newington police station. And, anyway, I just stuck some posters up right and saw them go past, right, and I got in the van and I started driving round that one way system. And they got in their car, they were in a car, and they were honking, they didn't have a siren, they were honking. And then they literally did the Starsky and Hutch, and pulled right up in front of me, you know, it could've been an accident, it was crazy. And as they were parallel to me, I was trying to ignore them, like, I don't know you're there. And then they did that, stop. And they just opened the door and dragged me out. Dragged me along the floor on me knees, these two guys. And they cuffed me behind me back and then dragged me again on my knees, and one of them, one of these young lads, they were basic, they were cursing, and it was like, an animal, psychopath, sociopathic crazy bastard. And he hit me on the arse, you know, with this kind of baseball bat thing, as I was on me knees, and it knocked me face first, you know. And then, then I remember the Welsh policeman arrived with the beard, and the mac, saying, how

many times have I gotta tell you? And says, we're taking you to the station now.

So, they took me to Stoke Newington police station, in the interview room and all that. And I just refused to speak. I didn't have any ID on me, and I still wouldn't ID meself. And I said, I need a duty solicitor. And that's it, you know. So, they left me in there for hours and hours and hours. And then this guy appeared - and I don't know why they did this but they did, it's all true - this guy appeared, huge Jamaican guy, and I know it sounds a cliché but his name was Linton, I remember he gave me his card and that, I haven't got it now but I remember his name was Linton whatever it was, and he said, What's happened? And I said, well, I was sticking posters up, and I explained, you know, said they were violent and that. He said, are you injured? I said, not really, though my knees are grazed, I showed him I'd got scratches on my knees, and bit of a sore arse, but you know, I said they whacked me on the arse with a baseball bat I said but apart from that, I'm alright. And he says, what do you wanna do? And I says, I don't know what's going on here. And he said, how about a taped interview with the arresting officer? He said, I could get that done but we might have to wait, they might stall. I said, okay. So, we did, we waited, and then we had this taped interview with this duty solicitor and these arresting officers, there was three of them actually, sitting there. And I just said exactly what happened. And then strangely enough, I had to give my details at this point right, so then I was in Loughborough Road and about a week and a half later I got a letter saying, would I attend the police station? So, I went to the police station and they said, 'cos this Linton solicitor was now doing the, you know, pushing back, right. And they said, if you'll forget it, we'll forget it. So, I went into the desk area with the letter and then the copper who hit me on the arse, the young lad who hit me on the arse with the baseball bat, came out and said, you drop everything and we'll drop everything. I said, drop what? What do you mean? I said, I'm not gonna stop. I was quite determined, I'm just gonna carry on with it. And he said, okay, we'll just ignore you. And I went, alright then. And that was that.

And then another time when I was on the North London thing I remember once, coming down Hornsey Rise. It was like a quiet street, wasn't it? It's almost like a bit of old, you can

⁷ Stoke Newington police station in the London Borough of Hackney was notorious in the 1980s and '90s for corruption, racism and brutal policing.

imagine that as an old town, village where London caught up with it. And it had this, 'cos it went down, I wouldn't say it was like Edinburgh High Street, but it was like a smaller, but it was very grand and everything and halfway down there was a classic old police station. You know, big old stone place. And we used to do that, and it was funny because, around that area, when I was doing things, there was two other policemen, in the middle of the night, you know, three in the morning, they used to put the sirens on, behind me back. You know, they'd come up, behind me and go [siren noises], and I'd look [shocked] round, and they'd thumb their noses at me, and drive off.

So anyway, Hornsey, so one day I was coming down there and I got a flat tyre, right, so I had a spare but there was no jack. I swear to God man, it was four o'clock in the morning and no jack, and I thought I'll go down the police station and see if they've got a jack. So, and I did actually have my driving licence then, my paper because sometimes it was important then, it could save hassle. I realised that. You know, you could stall but eventually if you showed that they would let you go. So, er, I went in the police station, and I said, oh, I've just got a flat tyre up the road. But I have got a spare but I've got no jack. I said, have you got a jack and a thing that takes the bolts off, the nuts off? And the policeman looked at me and he said, are you joking? And I said, No, honestly, I'm on job, night working. And he said, have you got a driving licence? And I do actually, I said yeah. And he said, okay, you leave the driving licence, and we'll give you the jack. So, I was waiting around for a bit, and they came out with the jack and a multi-thing, all types of nuts on it. But one where it would fit. So, I went up the road, I fixed the tyre, then I drove down the road back to the police station, handed it all in, got me licence and carried on.

RB Carry On Flyposting!

JM It was funny, it did become a bit of a comedy didn't it? And again, I was kind of getting into it then. I wouldn't say I was enjoying it, but I was thinking, this is alright. After working on, you know, I did quite a lot of hard work before. You know, I used to do all this stuff, paving and up on rooves, you know, it kinda suited me at the time, again I was still in my twenties, you know, coming up to thirty probably, coming up to that age. Now I'm 61, and when I left school at 15, well, I probably left school at 13...

AB What did your parents do?

JM My parents, my old man, a Scot, you know. My mother was Irish. And my old man was a really good, I mean he could draw anything as a kid, and his mother, I mean this is before the war, his mother wanted him to get into what would be graphics now. So she arranged for him to have an interview at I think it was The Herald, or The Scotsman, one o' them, 'cos they used to draw the adverts in those days, like the macs and the clothes, and he'd do that anyway, he'd copy them and he was good at it so, and he didn't turn up, he wanted to be on the railway. His passion was to drive steam engines. That's all he was, you know, as a thirteen, fourteen-year-old that's, you know, he wanted to be a steam engine man. But we had some relatives who were, his uncles, great uncles, who were on the railway but they weren't engine drivers, but they were involved in the whole locomotive, my grandfather, his father, they worked in the Great British Works which built steam engines from scratch. He was a lathe worker, a turner, and they made steam engines for all over the world, Malaysia, India, for the North Pacific, for Canada, they were built in Glasgow you know, everything, every single piece, from scratch. You know, the wheels, the unit, every pipe, everything. My old man said when he was a kid, you know, before the war, they used to, when they were finished, especially the Canadian stuff, they had great big low-loaders that could turn round the corner, and he says they were like space age then, just the lorries. And he says they used to put these engines on the back of low loaders and then drive about five, eight mile an hour through Glasgow to the docks, on the waterfront, the docks place, and he says, as kids we would all follow all the way. They would load it on to the ship and then weld, they'd weld it to the deck of the ship so it wouldn't roll and stuff. He says, it was like a big occasion, and then we'd all walk back home, we'd all skip along watching this. He said, yeah that's why I wanted to drive them.

Right, so he didn't turn up to that interview to be an illustrator, and his mum got mad. And then she got him a job at a stained glass works, doing it for churches or repairers, it was a little place. So, he worked there for about eight months and then eventually one of his relatives got him an interview in the engine yard. So, he managed to get in the engine yard and the first year or two he was just cleaning engines and loading coal and all that you know. And then eventually he got on the footplate and was a stoker. And that's how you learned, you learnt from the other guy, you know, as you're shovelling coal, he teaches you how it works. And that apprenticeship back then was ten years. 'Cos everything was hands-on, it was a big responsibility, so, he qualified as an engineer, he got on, then after about 5 or

6 years they started phasing the steam engines out. And, he never got over it.

My mother, again, she comes from, both my parents come from big families. Like, you know, nine, ten. And she worked in factories. Different factories. But the one I remember her working in for a long time was the Birdseye. And what's interesting about that is that in 1973 Nick Broomfield, the documentary maker, he did a film in the streets I grew up in, literally in my street. It's called The Rent Strike, 1973, you can check it out. My mother's on that film. Because they're in the Birdseye food factory. And the way Nick Broomfield films it, it's quite interesting because it shows you what kind of wage slavery it was. So, she worked there for like most of my growing up years. My parents when they were first married, they lived in Glasgow. And then they moved to Liverpool because of relatives of my mother, the Irish connections in Liverpool basically. And they came to Liverpool, which was supposed to be for a few months, 6 months, but they never left.

Me old man, worked with my Irish uncles who all came over in dribs and drabs in the 50s and 60s, right up until the late 60s they were still kind of migrating to Liverpool, you know. And he worked in a sawmill, right, with my grandfather. My Irish grandfather. His father-in-law, and some of his sons. My old man was quite pally with some of his brother-in-laws, they all got on quite well. So, he worked there for years and that developed into what was called the 'Hygena' and it went from this quite small sawmill into this huge factory, where like literally thousands, a couple of thousand people worked. And then, he got made redundant, I think it was about, I think it was the early 80s, 1980s, I can't remember. I was kind of gone by then. I left at 17. I left home at 17.

AB Why?

JM Well, when I first left school I got a job as an apprentice upholsterer at 15, and I worked there for 6 months. And there was all these, it was an industrial estate and there was a factory round the corner where me mate worked, and it was engineering and he said, I could get you in here. It's better, you know, engineering, it just seemed better. You know, upholstery, engineering?! So, I went there, and after 6 months working as a, I don't know if you'd call it labouring but basic engineering, doing stuff in the engineering workshop the works manager said, I'm gonna make you an apprentice welder. So, I was an apprentice welder for two years. I was quite into it, and then the steel strike happened in '79 I

think it was, anyway, half our factory had to go. And half the apprentices had to go. So, the older apprentices who were almost qualified got to stay and the ones that were a year or two had to leave. So, I was just, just about, I was about a month away. I remember them taking me in, saying sorry. And I was going, just keep me. And they went, no! You gotta go.

Right so, we were sent to the Union Office in the centre of Liverpool to get replaced. That's what it, that was the myth, right. So, I went down there, it was quite a big building, it was the headquarters of the engineering works in Liverpool for England, maybe Scotland as well but like, the HQ wasn't London it was the amalgamated engineering place, or whatever, it was a big place. You went in there it was like going into a bank, you know, like booths, and you had to get a ticket, and sit down. And I got a ticket, and I was sitting there and this other lad came in and sat next to me. And he said, what are you then? And I said, apprentice welder. He said, oh fuck, another one. You know what I mean? And he said, so am I, you know. And he said blah, blah. I can't remember the factory, and he said there's two hundred there. Apprentice welders on their way down. And he said, where are they gonna replace us. And I said, I don't know. I was only 17.

So, what happened was, I was sitting with this lad, we were sitting there for about ten minutes and he said, oh fuck this, I'm going down to Church Street. They're recruiting for all the summer jobs. I said, look, what do you mean? And he said, Butlins, Pontins, all that, hotels and everything. I guess this is about mid-March time, and he said, you can get jobs abroad and all that. I sat there for another ten minutes, I'd not been seen by anyone, and I thought, I'll just go down and have a look, so I went down to Church Street and it was like an old kind of department store, big old classic building and I went in and again, there's all these booths, all like pre-fab. booths, same thing again you had to take a ticket and sit down.

Got a ticket, and then my number was called, and I went into the booth, and it was a desk, a basic table and chairs and this guy comes out and says, alright, what do you do then? And I said, well, I've just been made redundant as a welder. And he said, no, what kind of job are you after? Can you do silver service, can you cook, what do you wanna do? Can you dishwash? And I said, yeah. And he said, have you had experience? And I said from 13 to 15 I washed dishes in this particular restaurant in Liverpool at weekends, Saturday and Sunday, that's all true, you know dishwashing machines, I know all that. And he said, where do you wanna go then? And I said,

what do you mean? He said, well, have you got any location, do you wanna go abroad, do you wanna...? Do you want Butlins, Pontins? And I said, I don't know. And he said, what about the Isle of Man? And I said, that sounds alright. And he said, okay then, Beach Hotel, Ramsey, Isle of Man. Be there on the 5th of April. And he went bumph, bumph, with this stamp thing and gave me this piece of paper. They'll be expecting yer.

The Isle of Man ferry in those days used to leave from the Pier Head, Liverpool. You could literally buy a ticket, on the day, like a bus ticket. So, I went down and bought a ticket, I got on the boat, you know, arrived in the Isle of Man, in Douglas, then I had to get a bus, and then realised like Ramsey was right at the top, it was the furthest away place from Douglas. And I got on this bus I realised, 'cos I'd been in Scotland a lot as a kid, I realised this was more like a Hebridean island, probably the most Southern Hebridean island when you look at it, it's quite hilly and that. I arrived at the Beach Hotel, which was a big, huge, classic, baronial thing, you know. S'posed to be 5 star! I could do a whole book just on that, but I'll leave it there.

So, I was taken from the hotel, down the street to this derelict house. And I was told that's where I was gonna stay, a kinda semi-derelict house. And I was bought in, they were saying, there's a couple of lads already here. So, I came in and they said there's two or three rooms that you can have. So, I picked what seemed the best. But there was still no plaster on the ceiling, just laths, there was this big old bed, which was filthy. And I kind of chucked the mattress over and it was filthier. So, I went and got my own bedding, believe it or not. Well, I got a sleeping bag, and one sheet. And I came back, and when I came in there was this Irish man there, who I now know as Eugene, this April kinda 1980 time.

So, I was 17 just going on 18. Eugene would've been about 20 at the time. And then he said he was there from Dublin. But it was also where his brother-in-law was, he was from Tipperary, and his name was John Fogerty. And that's a name I remembered 'cos of Credence Clearwater Revival, it was the same name. It was John Fogerty. And he says, like there's a Glaswegian here as well. And we're just getting to know him. Right, so, that evening, we were to start work the next day, and that evening I went out with these two Irish guys and this Glaswegian, er, Billy, who was about 25ish. He was a total Glaswegian, that's all I can say, he'd been in the army to get his HGV. And he was a big Rangers man, and all that. And it's funny 'cos the two Irish lads were very, the other side, so to speak.⁸

So, anyway, we're working in this place and we're doing 13 days, one day off, we're doing 14 hours a day, I swear, washing dishes, putting up stuff, doing, just crazy it was. Anyway, there was a big scene, a big fight in the kitchen, with the Glaswegian, and a chef, and one of the managers. Which again, I could describe it, but I think it would take too long, 'cos it's quite a story.

So, at that moment, we all left. Even though me and the two Irish guys weren't guilty. We thought we'll all just go, so we literally left. And we knew that at some point, like Billy, they're looking for Billy's arrest. Again, it's one of those scenarios again, they're looking to get Billy. Right, so, at the back of this hotel there was a single-track railway line that went from Ramsey to Douglas and he ran up there. And he decided, 'cos he wanted to stay off the road, he would walk along the Railway line to Douglas and duck down when the train come because he didn't want to be on the road. We ended up doing it with him, which was a bit stupid. So, we ended up in the Isle of Man for about two nights just, I'll be honest with you, just drinking. For two days, Douglas, again I was only 17 so I couldn't, I was getting a bit pissed I suppose. And basically, we ended up on a ferry to Dublin. That ferry to Dublin was one of the worst crossings in history, of a storm, yeah. So, we ended up on this ferry for about 14, 15 hours, and it was being pushed up to the Hebrides, kind of north of Ireland. It was crazy. Again, that was another crazy thing. You can look this storm up, it was 1980 again, end of April. Boats sank in that storm, not ours, thankfully. So, we ended up in Dublin, er, about 4 in the morning, rather than like 8 in the evening, you know.

And we walked all the way from the Dublin quays into the city, and then even further to Phoenix Park. And the two Irish lads, especially Eugene who was from Dublin said, just kip in the park and we'll come and get you, or, kip in the park and then meet us at a hotel tomorrow called the Ormond Hotel, just off O'Connell bridge, come there about 9 o'clock. So, me and Billy, the Glaswegian, we're sort of lying in Phoenix park, you know, and I remember waking up about 7 o'clock in the morning, and there's a huge cross. It must've been about 50, 60 feet high. 'Cos the Pope had just been there, they'd put this huge white cross up. For some reason I didn't see it the night before, and I woke up, and I'm there, and there's no one there, just me on my own. Billy wasn't there. And I'm looking

⁸ Referring to the long-standing political and religious rivalry between Protestants (Rangers fans being predominantly Unionist and Protestant) and Catholics.

at this big white cross. And I put my hand in my pocket, and I had one new pence! I'm in Dublin, right, I've sobered up, one penny and I'm 17. Right and I thought fucking hell, what was the name of that hotel? I couldn't remember the Ormond Hotel. The one Eugene was talking about. So, I remembered it was on O'Connell Street, so I thought I'll go to every hotel and ask. And I was sitting there, and I was thinking I better make a move, I better start walking now, you know, 'cos it was about an hour away from where we were. And just as I was getting up to move Billy appears. And it was like a relief, you know, he was 26. And I said, where have you been? He said, I've been for a shite. He says, this is where they have the horse races, and I was just looking at the racecourse and all that. You were snoring.

And I said do you remember where we need to go and he says yeah, the Ormond Hotel. So, I says, great, come on, let's go.

So, we arrived at the hotel, and we got in there and it was a big old hotel. In fact, that's where James Joyce wrote all his books, in that hotel, yeah, in fact it's often mentioned, you know.⁹ 'S a big old place, and it had like small rooms, and we kinda wandered in, you know, we had no money. I had one penny. We wandered into this kind of smaller room area. And as we were coming out this guy comes up to us and says, who are you? And we said, we're looking for Eugene. And he said, I'm his brother, Harry, sit down lads. So, we're like, oh, okay, and we sat down. And he came back with the biggest plate of sarnies I've ever seen. Big plate of butties, this is like what, 9 o'clock in the morning and two pints of Smethwicks, two pints of ale and a big plate of sandwiches. And he said, you must be hungry lads. And he put these two pints down and a big plate of sandwiches, and we're going, what the fuck!!

He said, Eugene's gonna be a bit late. So, we're eating these sarnies, we hadn't even had a drink of water, you know, and we drank these pints. And he come back in to look and he saw like the pints were right down, and he brought two more. And then another. So, we'd had about 3 pints, and it was about 10 o'clock in the morning. And then Eugene turns up, and he's like, hello, hello, hello. And he's going Jimmy, I'm taking you to my mother's house, right. So, Ballyfermot, which was a bit like Kirby actually, it was a council estate in Dublin, quite a rough council estate, and he said to Billy, you're going with this person and we'll get you somewhere to stay. So, he took me to his ma's house, and I remember soon as we walked in, it would be about, we'd had a few more pints as well. I was half-pissed and it was only like 12 o'clock, I'd had 5 pints. Right, we went into his ma's house and the first

thing she did was play a ceilidh on the piano. You know, diddly dah, welcome into our house. And I was right, yeah, I was kinda used to Irish people anyway. I'd been to Ireland before, and they had like a guest room downstairs you could say, you know, it was only a small council house, but it was only her and her husband who lived there.

Her husband, Col., the dad, you know all the stuff for horse racing, the silks, he made them, and designed them, right, but he was a complete alcoholic. I got that straight away. But that was his job, and he made them in one of the most famous companies in Dublin that have a history of that. You know like, Lester Piggot got all his stuff done there. They were the Saville Row of all that scene, and he was one of the head tailors but a complete alcoholic.

So, I was there, and the very next day I went to what was called the Manpower Services and, again, centre of Dublin. And I walked in and I'm looking at the cards and there was one in there called CO2 welding, now that's the most basic welding. You learn that in a week. It's dead easy. And, like I say, at that time I was still physically 17, I was only a week away from me birthday but, you know, 17 going on 18. So, I took the card, and I went up to the guy, and he said, you don't look old enough. I says, I am. Just get me the interview. So, he got me the interview, and again it was in Ballyfermot, not far from where at that moment I was being looked after by Eugene's parents if you like. I didn't have any money. In fact, Eugene's ma gave me a ten-pound note, an old Irish ten-pound note, just give me one, so I had some money.

So, it was like 6 factories, and this one was brand new. I went in and there was the works managers and all that. And it was so new they didn't even have the electricity switched on, so they couldn't test me, to see if I could weld. The works manager was from Manchester. I remember him and, this is 1980, he had a big black moustache, and he almost had like an afro kinda haircut, a curly perm, and he was going what the fuck are you doing here you Scouse bastard? The usual, you know. I said, I'm a welder. And he says, well, we can't test you out. And he's looking at me going, just a kid, you know. Gi's a job. You know what I mean, you're just a kid. You

⁹ The Ormond Hotel on Upper Ormond Quay is the setting for the Sirens episode in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce left Ireland in 1904 and wrote in various locations across Europe, primarily in Zurich, Trieste, and Paris. He claimed, however, "For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin, I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world."

can't weld, and I says I can. And he said explain it to me, so I did. So, he's, oh you know something. And he said I'll tell you, do you know what grinding is? And he says, tell me. So, I explained. So, he says alright, we'll take you on as a grinder, which is like a labouring job. Right, and I said great, it was a job.

I went back and says, I've got a job, I start on Monday. So, I arrive on Monday and there's a whole brand-new workforce, right, we're all starting on the same day. But a lot of them knew each other, a lot of the Dubliners, from different factories and different jobs. And there was quite a few Germans there because all the machinery was German and it was brand new, yeah. So, they were there for any glitches, and to teach people, you know it was all lathes, turning lathes, and big guillotines that would cut like 5 mil. steel, you know. Big cranes and everything.

They still didn't have the electricity on so we spent the first week playing football and getting to know each other. And we were getting paid as well 'til we got everything up and running. So, it got up and running, they got the electricity on. And the works manager, the Manchester guy, he says, welders over here, and he says, and you Scouse, you haven't shut up all week. You're telling everyone what a great welder you are. You can go first. And I'm alright. And he give me some metal, and it was only CO2, and what it is is with different metal you have different voltage, you know, I knew all this. So, first trick was, he had the voltage on full, he had the wire speed racing, all fucked up. So, I put the earth on and that, right, and I fixed everything, and I did the first one perfect. Not only that, this equipment, this new German equipment was like, you couldn't go wrong with it. And then he gets like a big angle iron, which is heavier, where you have to adjust everything. And he's like, do that then. So, I done that. And then he give me a few more bits. And I'm not being funny or anything, I'd been doing it for years previous, I knew what I was doing. So he goes, alright then. Alright Scouser it looks like you're not fucking full of shit then. Right, you're now with the welders. And I'm, alright, great.

So, I was started off doing casings. In the end, forgive me for being so arrogant but, at the end, I was doing the top welding jobs. I just had a knack for it, and eye for it and everything. So, I was there, I was there for about, I came back and forwards to Liverpool every few months, and my nephew, you know Robbie, I came when he was born, to be his godfather. We were all bought up Catholics, I'm not,

I was never, you know. It was all that classic ceremony that came with it. I was backwards and forwards, and I was getting this blow over there, right. This weed, which was fucking shocking.

Also, while I was there, I remember seeing Bob Marley at Dalymount Park.¹⁰ And there was other things that happened. I remember seeing The Police at a festival, which was weird, 1980 in Dublin. And the very first U2 ever played anything, they were first on the bill. And, you know, I got into going to a certain club at the weekends. You know I'd got a social thing going, I suppose. I had my 18th birthday in, er, which was in probably one of the most notorious IRA pubs in fucking Ireland, d'you know what I mean. They made a fuss of me and everything, it was weird. No, I'm just being honest, when you think back on it, it was like, fucking hell man.

RB In terms of flyposting, you must like the freedom. I mean at the factory you would've had to clock in or something.

JM I think the first, I always found Tim quite infectious, you know, so a lot of it had to do with the personalities and the people I was meeting. Early on it was a big part of it. If it wasn't for them there's no way I'd have continued longer than a month.

What happened was Richard was having a few issues here, in 1996, you know, it was time for you to go to Glasgow. You were here a couple of years right and then I came in '96. Because you really had to go at that point. There must've been about 7 or 8 months when you were having to stop and start. And you were living in Arrowfield, around the corner. And basically, it was like, would I go up? 'Cos I was chomping to come up. I wanted away from London. You had about 25 cases coming up for you from the magistrates. It was all bureaucracy. But it was to the point where you couldn't move anymore.

RB Robbie was in jail for ages wasn't he?

JM Yeah, and I came up. And I moved into Arrowfield with you. This would be, I'll tell you when it was, it was June. It was the beginning of June 1996. You showed me what was happening, and you went to Glasgow after about 2 weeks. And then we'd come, maybe one or two days. And then I started to go to Glasgow one day a week. And we started encountering like

¹⁰ Bob Marley's concert at Dalymount Park in Dublin on July 6th 1980 was his last outdoor performance before his untimely death in 1981.

Poster Paul, and Murdy, and people like that. I had a few, I remember us having a scene at the railway station with Paul.

ENDS

Transcribed by AB
(8,207 words)

RB I think Paul quite liked me!

JM Yeah, but this is before, before. I mean Gary and him become like best buddies, didn't they? But the first time we physically saw him I was with you, it was just me and you. There was like a railway station where they had a thing just outside, which was big. And we just rattled through all their stuff. And then he approached us, with a couple of other guys, and erm, we had a chat. And he went, when I opened me mouth he went, you're from Liverpool? And I went, yeah. And he said, fuck sake man, you're coming up from Liverpool now? And I was like, yeah! And he said, how many more of yous are there? And I said, as many as we need. And stuff like that. You know, the way you just say stuff. I said as many as we need. He's going, this is gonna have to stop, we're gonna have to put a stop to this. And I says, well, we just need a proper chat don't we?

And, after that, me and you had a bit of a fall out with Myles. Because, in honesty, he didn't tell us everything we needed to know. And he kinda put us out there for like, bait. And we were in a sticky situation. And I believe, if it wasn't for Paul, and it wasn't for that railway station, we'd a got a doin'. 'Cos there was four club guys, you know, bouncer types from the clubs, standing in the wings, waiting. And it was Paul who said, leave it. Right? It was him who said, leave this alone.

RB He was the sensible one.

JM But they were all ready to drag me and you down a back alley and give it to us, know what I mean, in a Glasgow fucking style. Paul Delaney, he was alright, you know. He just, he didn't have that demonic spirit. He's got a soul.

RB He was more of a businessman really.

JM I just think he was a bit more empathic, and conscious. I only met him a few times but him and Gary, they become like the terrible twins. Good friends.

RB I remember saying to him when I left, I went to say goodbye, and he said, where are you going? And I said, I'm going to fly-post Barcelona. And he couldn't fucking believe it. He just said, no! Can you go and fly-post there? And I just said, you can fly-post where you like!

NB: To retain the individual vocal quality of testimonies transcripts have been minimally edited, with redactions made only when personal or legally sensitive material demands. Occasionally words are spelt phonetically to convey a sense of participants' colloquial pronunciation. Often repeated 'in-between' words or 'place holders' - indexing witnesses' gathering their thoughts - are likewise faithfully reproduced to retain the pace and pauses, the musicality of participants' verbal expression. Memory, of course, is not a flawless process. Transcriptions have been fact checked to a degree. Misremembering one detail of an event or circumstance does not render the recollection invalid.

10TH SEPT, 2023
11.15PM - 2.00PM

VENUE

26 Links Gardens
Edinburgh EH6 7TG

PRESENT

Jimmy Miller
Richard Broadbent
Adrian Burnham

Interview two with

JIMMY MILLER

29

RB Okay, let's make a start, do you mind if I ask you about 12 questions that you could answer quite briefly?

JM No.

RB Have you ever had a nick name?

JM No, I haven't.

RB What was your first poster?

JM Er, it was a festival poster. I think it was something like Rich Hall or something, 1992. Originally, I thought it would just be 3 months [fly-posting] in London, and then it became a vehicle to move up here.

RB So, one of the main motivations was to move up here?

JM Yeah, well, I like London. I lived in London from 20 'til I was 36. But I was always wanting to get out really. I used to be here a lot as a kid. And I used to spend summer holidays, the six weeks up in the hills with one of me dad's brothers. He had 6 kids and two of his sons, one was six months older and one six months younger. We used to write letters when we were kids. And so, yeah, in some respects I probably had a romantic idea, because it was always a holiday, always a great time. I was coming here all my life, for weddings and things. I just always wondered what it would be like to live and work here, rather than always camping trips or whatever. And it is part of my heritage. So, fly-posting became a way to move and it just sort of continued.

But then we did have like, we had some rough rides here when I was in and out, you know, in and out of the magistrate's court. And where the Council went wrong was, they tried to set us up, and it all backfired. 'Cos they did actually try and, instead of what it was which was, they wanted to set us up as criminals, and criminal damage, and violent intimidation, which was all bollocks. There was none of that.

What I'm saying is there was none of that from us. People were throwing shit at my window, there was all that kind of nonsense, beeping their horns. And as soon as you'd go, right, I'll see 'em and they were off. The usual. I knew who they were. In fact, they were trying to pretend, they were in this other car. And I approached one of them [...] and, in fact, he was one of the people who started Out Of

Hand, way back, before he sold it on, yeah.¹ In fact, I had loads of run-ins with him.

He actually, got this big scouser to, you know, he thought like, I'll get a big scouser. And I met this guy on the bridge, and he took a run at me, literally. I remember it 'cos it was monsoon rain. And this scouse guy, he was a bit younger, maybe about twenty-five. Anyway, he took a run at me. And I just stood there. Then he stopped about yard in front of me and said, this is too public a place. So, I'm, yeah alright. And I picked my brush up like that and he just legged it. I just stood there 'cos if I'd run, that would've been it. Then he stopped, and it was pissing down, I remember, really heavy rain.

RB You might've done yesterday, did you mention your parents?

AB Yes, he did Rich.

JM Yeah, my old man was a locomotive, this is in Scotland, my old man was born and bred in Glasgow obviously. He used to do different runs. But a lot of it was freight, you know. Like they used to do an annual cattle run from the Cairn of Lochalsh, up in Skye. Erm, and they'd bring all the cattle from Skye and they'd load the trucks up and they'd come to Glasgow. And then my old man said then they used to change engines and they would go to this abattoir in Carlisle and that abattoir has been there - I'm not sure if it's still there - but it was there like, Rob Roy used to take his cattle there.² That's how old the place is.

RB What about your mum?

JM Mostly from my memory she worked in the Birdseye factory, and, as I say, that Nick Broomfield film The Rent Strike, she's on that. Er, and loadsa people I know, loadsa kids, you know. I grew up there. When you see it you're gonna go, you're joking? And I'll go no, honestly, that's where we grew up. It was quite a mad place. And what you'll find is, like again, the neglect of Councils and all this shit. But people, all the people worked. And you'll notice how lucid people are. They know what's happened to them.

RB What about school?

JM Well, I went to, I started school in Liverpool, infant school. And the infant school and primary school were in the same place. So you were in the infant school for three years. And then the primary was just over the other side of

the yard. It was called St. Lawrences, and I loved it. I wouldn't even stay off when I was sick. You know what I mean, I always wanted in. I've still got mates from that primary school that I know now. I always liked, my old man had us reading and writing before we started school. And my old man used to educate us at home. And on Fridays we used to have quiz nights and he'd chuck sweets at you if you got it. Yeah, he always read. And that's how, I reckon, I mean I've got hundreds of books in that back room. So, he was always very into reading. He was quite a smart guy, my old man. It's quite weird really that you always think he could've done, you know, X, Y and Z.

So I was quite into the primary school, and I was quite good. You know, If I didn't come first in geography and history, I wanted to know why! I was completely into it. And I was in the football team, and aged 11 we won the cup and the league. And we got presented with our medals by Ian Callaghan.³ And I've still got them actually.

Er, and then I went into the secondary school. And where we were there was ten Catholic, you know, Liverpool is very Catholic. It just is. It's the only Catholic majority city in the UK, not that everyone is. It's just in the background, you know. So, there was ten primary schools and they all went to one massive school. Those ten schools made up the new year at St. Kevin's. It was two thousand boys. And it was a loony bin. It was, one of Harold Wilson's kind of socialist dreams really. That went wrong. So, it was built in 1966, it opened in '66, '67, and it got demolished in 1982. They just ripped 'em up and, and it was a nut house. By the time I was twelve, I just used to walk in and out when I felt like it. And by 13 I'd say I was hardly there.

RB So why did you lose interest?

JM I guess like the people you hung round with and all that. You know, it was a complete breakdown in that place [...] You know what we used to do, I know it sounds nuts, this was whacky but true. We used to forge letters, right, like a teachers' letter, we' get some, someone would nick some paper, headed paper, someone would write it and then someone else would sign it. And we'd go to the main library in

1 Established 1994 Out of Hand, originally a promotional flyer distributor, nowadays an outdoor advertising company.
2 Rob Roy MacGregor (b.1671 d.1734) was a Scottish outlaw, who later became a folk hero.
3 Football midfielder who holds the record for the most appearances for Liverpool FC between 1960 and '78.

Liverpool, which was, which is amazing. It's one of the best in Britain, it's incredible. And we used to go there and say we were on a school project. And spend all day. And next door was the museum, which again is one of the biggest outside of the British Museum. We used to hang round in there, sometime playing tick, or hide n seek in the museum, or in the library. And the other thing is we'd like go into the reference room, right, and get these guys to get books down like, right, with white gloves on and all that. You know, that one's two hundred years old, and we're like, right, get that one. And in some ways we were learning things, but we weren't at school.

Eventually they [JM's parents] got a letter. Right, and my old man was quite shocked I remember, erm, and he said fucking hell nine months you haven't been near the place. And he says, what I'm pissed off about is, I'm just finding out now. You know, not after nine weeks, nine days. So there was a place then, where we were all put in a room, and because of the nature of the kids in that room I suppose, there was breakdowns constantly. Sometimes we were put in a room to stare at the wall, so I just stopped, I stopped doing that. And eventually they gave up on me. They just let me go.

I've got an older sister, by about a year. She's got four kids that've all grown up. Ian Gibson in Manchester, he's my brother-in-law. And, they've all got kids. I was down there, down there at Robert's a couple of weeks ago. My oldest nephew Robbie he's 43, 44, he's got a riding school with his missus. You know, they live out, you know, it's quite a place.

RB After twenty odd, thirty odd years of this, do you have any regrets about posting?

JM No. Not really, I mean apart from all the hassle that used to exist, which we haven't had for like ten years. And there's like a lot of flexibility, you know, when you do it. It's not like a nine to five. You've got so much to do in a week and sometimes I'll do Sunday. Like all the stuff, next week John's in Prague so me and Tam have got to do his run as well. I usually get everything ready on Saturday or Sunday, mix the paste, fold the posters, and we wet roll 'em, so they're in water. And I'd rather do that then than come in Monday morning and start folding, mixing paste and then going out. I'd rather get it all ready. And we usually start about ten, that seems to be the general time. But you can do it anytime, sometimes I'll do like a double, not a double shift but I'll do a lot, and then Thursday I'm off. I mean I'm fanning around but as long as you get it done. Some weeks are busier than others.

RB Do you like working with other people?

JM Well, actually I prefer that 'cos mostly I've been on my own for most of it, I still am generally. But I'll go with Tam maybe one day a week but I'm generally on me own, next week I'll be with Tam all week.

RB So, what do you go for breakfast and stuff?

JM I don't eat breakfast, I only eat one meal a day. I'll just go out on whatever. I mean tomorrow we've got the two billboards, one of them's quite high, erm, and we'll probably do the two billboards, ten drums, maybe ten wall sites. [...]

RB How do you get on with billboards?

JM Ah, it's alright, as long as you do the first two, I find, top and bottom, as long as you get them lined up right then it just works. I've been doing it long enough I suppose.

RB So, what would you say is your main passion or talent, the music, or writing, or what?

JM Music, song writing, yeah. I mean I was a late starter with that. What happened was, again, it's quite weird. One of the first bands, you know in the 70s I saw a lotta bands, I saw like Led Zeppelin, I mean it's Liverpool, there's music everywhere, you can't escape it. Even as kids, we used to get singles, you know, I remember The Beatles splitting up. I'd be like 9 or 10 years old and in Liverpool you'd remember that.

Yeah, so music was always around. And the kids in the street, I had an older cousin, again that was born in Glasgow, whose family moved to Liverpool. 'Cos what happened is my dad, and his best mate, my dad got out of the RAF after his national service, he was in the middle east, for two odd years actually, it was a bit longer than two years, it was in Egypt, Yemen and all these places, and he learned Arabic. He picked it up really quickly. So, he became what they call the 'parlay guy', so he used to escort officers and do the interpreting, yeah, he spoke it really well. And he used to speak to me in Arabic as a kid, so I picked up Arabic phrases like 'kub min alshaay', 'cup o' tea'. He used to say phrases like 'kwban min alshaay walkhubz almuhamas', 'make me a cup o' tea and toast'. And the other thing, one of my cousins married a guy from Baghdad, Farouk, and when me old man was alive and that, he'd see Farouk, they'd just talk in Arabic, everyone else in the

room going you're fucking speaking, you know, can you stop that now, stop showing off.

So, he was quite into it, and at thirteen, this is where the music comes in again, at thirteen I started working, washing dishes in a restaurant in Liverpool. Started on Saturdays, and then Sundays. It was a restaurant, they were Arabs, so there were Syrians, Egyptians, mostly. And a Jordanian but they were mostly Syrians and Egyptians. And my old man used to come down there every Saturday afternoon and sit in the corner rabbiting away with these guys. I worked there for two years, from thirteen to fifteen. Sunday I'd start at twelve, and it wasn't bad money, when I think about it now, as a kid at that age it would be about having sixty quid every weekend, a lot of money really, so I could buy records and gig tickets.

And one of the chefs, a few of them were Arabic but one of the chefs was a scouse guy and he was always playing cassettes, and I'd never heard some of it. And so, the theatres were facing, the Empire theatre, the Royal Court theatre we're right facing this restaurant. At thirteen also I started going to gigs. Erm, some of the bands I didn't know really, you know, I didn't know much about, I'd just go for the experience, the lights and the smoke and the whole thing, you know, was a buzz really.

But one of the bands I loved, this was '74, '75, and it was Hawkwind, and they kind of blew me mind. The gig was insane. And so, I kinda got quite into them. And anyway, in Liverpool, it was '78, '79, I used to go to this club and you could smoke dope there, no one give a shit, you could roll it up on the bar. The police, no one, no one give a bollocks. There was beer and stuff. It was a kind of long-haired kind of place really, and we were members. And I'd just gone in there, and I was literally making a joint on the bar, and I'd just lit it, and I knew all me mates would be round this corner sitting in the same place they always sat. And this big tall guy came over to me and he said, where can I get some of that? And I said, this? And I gave him the joint. And I said, where are you from? And he said, oh just outside London. And I said, what the fuck are you doing here? You know, as you did. And he said I've come up to be at university. And I said, alright, you know. And erm he said, so do you know where I can buy some? [...] So all my mates, I introduced Doug to everyone and that. And he stayed the evening and that and at the end I bit a bit off and give him some blow, and he said but do you know where I can buy some though? He said, where do you live? We said we live a

few miles away, this was in Matthew Street it was called, we live a few miles away from here, I said, you know blah, blah? And he was like, yeah. And I said there's four blocks of flats, fourteen storeys high. We were 17, 18, whatever, it was before I went to Dublin. I said we live in the end one, on the tenth floor. I said if you see flashing lights, that'll be our flat, me and two lads.

What it was was we knew a girl, we were all underage, and we knew a girl who was 18 and she'd got the rent book. And she kept the rent book, so we used to give her the rent money plus a fiver every week, that was the deal.

So, we had this flat, crazy flat, and then we had the flat next door, right. And started growin' blow in there. Fuck, honestly, it was like a jungle. I've got photos. In fact I got sent one recently from one of me mates. I'll show you in a minute, and I've got a Hawkwind T-shirt on. What happened was, Doug yeah, Doug lived up near Toxteth, Lark Lane area. Like the student area of, there's a big park there, quite a nice park. I never thought I'd see the guy again, right? So, Wednesday it was or something, there's a knock at the door and he's standing there. He's got a crash helmet so he obviously had a bike and I said, how did you fucking find this place? And he said, the flashing lights. 'Cos we had disco lights that used to [come on] automatically with the music. And they were on all the time, we just had records on constantly, and these lights. That's how he arrived. So we became mates. And I remember we used to go up his place quite a lot 'cos he had this big old Georgian building made into bedsits, flats and student flats, it was a big old place. And we used to go there, taking acid and that. I mean, the first time I had anything, it was mushrooms when I was 15. Before I even got stoned on dope. And that was quite mind blowing that mushroom thing. And I got quite into that for a while. And, yeah, I don't regret it, but you can only do that so many times.

RB We're the mushrooms stronger than the acid then?

JM It depends, yeah. Can be. But it depends what the acid's like as well.

And this is I suppose how I ended up in London, how I met yous lot. Doug, anyway right, he dropped out of the uni. And I said, why, why have you, did about a year, you know. Like I say, we'd become really good friends. He was a great guy. He was from Orpington. Lovely guy, Doug. He's been in Australia now 35 years or something. But anyway, Doug, he dropped out

and he said a couple of weeks later he says, I'm gonna go to London, I know a guy there who's got a building company and I worked for him before, you know, for a couple of weeks to get some money. So I'm gonna do that. Get some money and then I'm gonna go on one of these six month round the world trips. And I went, oh right. So, anyway, this was a Sunday. He came up to the flat to say tara, I'm leaving tomorrow. And I'm, what tomorrow?! He said, yeah, I'm actually starting. Oh no, this was Saturday and he said, I'm leaving Sunday, and I'm starting work on Monday for this guy. And I said, do you think he'll have a job for me? And he said, I don't know, I s'pose we could ask. So we went outside and spent about an hour trying to find a phone that worked. [...] Anyway, Doug, so he put this guy on the phone. And he's like, alright, if you can get down here for Monday morning, I'll give you a start. So the next day I was hitch hiking to London. Just like that.

We arrived in Catford, and Doug took me to one of his old school pals, it was half one in the morning, you know. And he had a 3 bedroom Council place in Catford. Er, and he was looking for someone to share the bills. And, his name's Alan Williams but he was called Wilf, everyone just called him Wilf. So he said you can stay here for a week or two initially, you know, 'cos he didn't know me. And in the end, after a week or so, he was like stay as long as you like, you know.

Now, he was in this Normil Hawaiians.⁴ He was the bass player, right. Now I didn't play anything, I didn't play any instruments but I kinda wrote, if you like. We were both the same age, all the others are [older], we're kinda the same age and the drummer but the others, Guy's 64, 65 now. Mark, who passed away in December, he was 65. So, they all went to the same school as Doug, in Orpington, St. Olave's, it's quite a posh school, you know, they're all very middle class these guys. All of them. Like job wise, Guy's old man worked for the, he was a spy actually. It was called 'working for the Foreign Office', so Guy grew up in India, and Hong Kong, places like that. And Wilf's old man was a Scotland Yard detective. So, they were all quite, you know, completely different from me in every way you can imagine, still are I suppose.

Anyway, so Wilf was in that band, they'd just had an album coming out, you know. I was 20 then, 'cos I remember me 21st birthday, what I was doing. I was with Guy from the Hawaiians and we did 24 hours washing cars for 'Help a London Child', just by St. Pancras, you know the arches up St. Pancras, one of them. And it was funny because when it

went 12 o'clock, Capital Radio were there, or whatever they were, yeah, Capital Radio, and the guy comes over and says, 'I believe you've just turned 21?' in the interview and all that and they paid fucking happy birthday on the radio and all this bollocks, and we were 24 hours non-stop on blueys.⁵ That was my 21st birthday.

So, anyway, what was weird about meeting them was, I was working, I started this job, and it was Kensington and Chelsea, and again it was just a different world. You know, I'd just come from this council estate. It was completely different, posh houses and everything, and it was just so different. And erm, I never really saw much of Wilf. I was actually knocking around with one of the guys I was working with, Liam, guy called Liam. Mostly. I was seeing Wilf but anyway, what happened was the singer from his band, Guy, this was after being in London, what 5 or 6 weeks, he kinda knocked on the door. I opened the door and I said, Wilf's not here. He was always at his girlfriends to be honest, he's at Sarah's her name was. And he goes, I know, I was just driving past and I've come to say hello. I said, oh, really? He was quite a posh guy, the way he speaks, he was really posh. Not like a London accent, really posh voice. I said, alright, come in then. He come in and he said, I'm just heading up to Soho. He said, and I'm gonna pop into the record company, do you wanna come? And I went, alright. Again, it was so novel for me, it was such a different thing, you know, a record company, really! It was called 'Illuminated Records'. And it was run by a guy called Keith Bagley. So, I kinda got to know Guy. And he seemed intrigued by me to be honest. This crazy 20 year old scouser. Must have thought I was a bit whacky, you know. I s'pose I was then. Whacky hair.

And anyway, like, they lived in a big house, in Thornton Heath, further out, you know. It was 7 bedrooms, and it had 2 huge living rooms, and a big kitchen, and a big dining room, fucking huge place, big garden. And a few of the band people lived there. Then I found out like Dave Anderson, who was in like Hawkwind, right, and not only that but one of my favourite Hawkwind albums, you know, he was on that one. He had a studio in Wales but he still did a lot of stuff in London, so he kept a room. So, he was away a lot. But, he would be there a lot too, you know, depending on what he was doing in London. So, he had this studio, it was a hill

4 Post punk experimentalist musicians collective formed principally by vocalist / guitarist Guy Smith in 1979.
5 UK slang for amphetamines.

farm in Wales, right out there. And he converted this into a studio. A lot of famous albums got made there, like My Bloody Valentine did all their stuff there, loads of stuff. And all the Hawaiians' albums. The first 3 albums were recorded there. So, that was like weird, you know, Dave Anderson from Hawkwind. And Guy said, why don't you and Wilf move here, there was two rooms, and we thought, alright. So we moved in. And I remember the first time I met Dave Anderson, I got tongue tied, fucking serious. He come in, and he sat down, and I'm like...

RB Had you seen him play gigs and stuff?

JM No, actually. Lemmy had took over from him. But he was in Van der Graaf Generator and one of the most famous Kraut Rock bands Amon Duul II, he was on the first two albums which again I'd got, so he was bit like, and he come in and he made this big sliff, and he's going, alright? You're the new, how'd you do? And he speaks really posh but he's originally from just down here, well, he went to boarding school, and he speaks 'very' [posh accent] but Scottish, totally Scottish but posh. So, he's sitting there talking, and he's passing me this joint, and he's going, oh Guy was saying you like 'In Search of Space', that's the Hawkwind album I loved. I said, yeah. I was like, do you know what I mean? I thought fucking hell. So, I was a mad Hawkwind fan, and then I'm in London, and then 3 months later, I'm moving in this house living with these guys and this band.

And so, one day, I'll never forget this. I'm in London about 4 or 5 months now. And I was in the bedroom, I had this big bedroom, right, huge rooms. And it had a marble fireplace in there, and a bed settee as well [...], big bay windows. And I was in there, and I was writing. And Guy come in and he went, what's that? And I said, oh nothing. I had a plastic bag full of scraps of paper. So he's, what's all that then? I and said, it's a load of shite. And he just picked a bit off, I'd just done it, and he went, did you write that. And I said, yeah. And he said, God, I really like that. I could make a song out of that. [...] I said, honest, I got a bit para', I said, you're taking the piss! And he said, no, no, I'm dead serious.

And later on that afternoon, this guy turned up, Jim Lusted, and there wouldn't have been the Stereo MCs sound without him, this all came later. And he came in, this big tall guy, and Guy says, we were at school together, Jim and me, originally, it was me and him started this band. But he's off doing other things. And then he goes, I was just, strangely

Jim, I've just seen him [JM] writing upstairs, he's got some interesting stuff. And I went, you know, behave. And this Jim just said, let's have a look at it then? And I says, it's all rubbish. And he said, if it's all rubbish why don't you throw it in the bin. 'S what he said. And he said, let me have a look. And Guy said, just get that one you showed, that I was looking at. So, I went and got it. I showed him that. And Guy said, can I have that now and I'll do something with it. And I went, okay. So that's how I first got involved with the Hawaiians.

And then Guy said, have you got any more? And I was like, yeah. And then, and there was guitars lying round, so I started and that Jim was visiting again. And he showed me the first basic chords, you know, A,B,C,D, basic chords. So when no one was there, you know, it must be irritating for people to hear but when no one was there I was practising like crazy. And within a few months I'd picked it up quite well, the basic chords. And then anyway, May 1983, Guy said, I had this other poem about Kirby, you know about where this documentary was made. And it's quite a long poem. Erm, it starts off like, There's a place I know where for the first time that day your mother's eyes fills with water, She sees her children's violent play it's okay she'll get Valium off the doctor... Kind of stuff. And I put some chords to it. Anyway, so it was May '83 and Guy says, right, we're going to Wales to do a new album. And I says, oh great. And he says, are you coming then? I said, What?! What, you want me to come along? And he says, yeah. So that was it, again. It was a proper studio. And I'd never been in one of these places before. The barn was converted as a studio, it had upstairs, downstairs, a big control room, it was proper professional place. And then they recorded that poem. Which is on an album, I'll give you a copy on a CD. And I've got an album as well 'cos what happened, the company I'm with now, Upset The Rythym, they re-released all the old albums. And they did it, gatefold and white vinyl and all o' that. And they've all done fairly well, you know. But only on a level, you know. And the last gig we did at Café OTO they had to turn like 80 people away. It was in Hackney, it was full, like 300 or whatever. We'd done that place a few times. The record company now are brilliant, they are fucking amazing. They're like so unusual for the music business 'cos they do everything they say and they really care. They let you decide everything. So, we've got a new album hopefully. It's just been finished, you know, the running order, literally a week ago. We recorded a lot of it in Kintyre on the west coast. In a big house. 'Cos Simon, he's the head of music tech. at Canterbury Uni. so he's a proper engineer, you know, he

teaches it. He could get all the stuff. I mean again, really good equipment, really expensive microphones and the rest of it. And we went up to this big house at Kintyre for a couple of weeks.

And then other things have been done, like the [...] poem I sent you, I recorded that in Leith, 'cos I needed to get an old Scot. I wrote a poem, but I wrote it in old Scots, right, so I had to get this fella to recite it. And there's a guy, I got 3 people to do it, everyone had a go kinda thing. But I think we knew it was gonna be Rodney (?) 'cos he does spoken word, he's like Scotland's Richard Burton. I recorded that bottom of Leith Walk and then sent the files down to Simon. Who added a few things, you know, so there's been a bit of that going on. But anyway, that's how I got involved with the Hawaiians. Well, I didn't sing in the Hawaiians but strangely enough on this album there's one song I'm singing [...] I've got 100s of recordings. So, I'm into music and writing rather than doing other peoples, I just really never got into doing other people's songs.

RB You like photography as well don't you?

JM Yeah, I've got binders there with loads of stuff in. But what I'd do is I'd add things, I'd draw on them, or paint on them, or fuck them up, or photoshop, that sort of thing. I used to like painting, but I haven't done any painting for a while though. [...] I used to do quite a lot in London actually. 'Cos Andrew Webb gave me loads of canvasses and, you know, paint and stuff. [...] He gave me 4 or 5 big ones. We had to get a van, you know me and Andy, Andy Gibson. 'Cos, you know, I lived with Andy for years. Me and Andy, I met Andy and I was only, again, quite young, about 23. We shared flats for like, 10, 12 years, easy.

AB And you were in a band together, what were they called?

JM They were called Father O'Head, they were named after a priest from school, a school I was at, St. Kevin's, there was a lot of priests there...

[... Talk about Robbie Martin (?), and guitars, 56m. 30s. > 59m. 20s. then showing a clip of guitarist Kevin Armstrong playing Live Aid]

JM See, this is Kevin, look. We become really good pals. He was at school with, erm, and I'll always remember this day, you know, 'cos Kevin, the next day Kevin turned up, he'd been up all night. He turned up at ours about 8 in the morning,

the day after Live Aid, with all these photographs, already produced photographs, from coming in on the helicopter and all that. So, the reason I'm putting this on is because Kevin gets a special introduction on this. Anyway, he's one of the most famous guitar players now. He plays with everyone. That's how I met, I met Paul McCartney with Kevin. Kevin was doing an album with Paul McCartney in Hastings and I went down for the weekend. And Elvis Costello. Kevin was in the Hawaiians but then he started playing with Thom Dolby. And then that album Blinded By Science, you remember that famous album, it was him and Kevin done that. And then from Thomas Dolby he was in Prefab Sprout 'cos Dolby was producing them. And then David Bowie, he did loads of stuff with Bowie. All the Iggy Pop albums. Yeah, he was in Public Image. You know like Rise, that one. Propaganda, remember the German band. I could go on and on. I mean he's a session guy, his CV's ridiculous.

What happened was, one day Kevin came round, right, and I'd learnt the chords, probably [for] about six months, I'd been getting right into it. I'd been working and Kevin popped round and I said, I'm gonna buy a guitar, you know. And he said, how much have you got? And I'd been working, and I said, I wanna get a good one, 120 quid say. And he said, oh come with me then, come now, I know where we can go get the right one. So I went with him. And he was like, right, that's the one you want. That's the same guitar. And then me and Kevin, right, I started writing songs. I'm gonna have to tune this... [JM tunes guitar]

So, I was writing all these songs, and it's funny actually because I realised they were all about these characters, you know each song, and I didn't know while I was doing them. And it was afterwards it's like they were all about these characters from Liverpool. Like one is about this old Irish guy who used to come into this bar, playing the spoons and sticks to bum drinks. And he was an old seaman, you know, I wrote a song about him. And then there was another guy, Old Jack. And it was only afterwards, and Kevin said they're all about these different characters aren't they? [JM still tuning guitar]

Do you want a glass of wine or something? I've got a bottle of wine, it's been there for ages. I've gotta do these Harvey stories 'cos some of they're funny. So anyway, I played this song to Kevin. And he went, Oh let's record that. So we recorded it. And he said, have you got anymore. So we carried on recording. And the next minute he says, come with me. And we went to Cherry Red.⁶ He knew all these people. And the

guy said, I like this, blah, blah, blah, you know, let's do something. And what happened was, cut a long story short, Kevin was in LA, dunno if you wanna use this but, this shit happened right! He was invited to this kind of private party and they were having a sacrifice, a human sacrifice there, and it blew his mind.

RB A human sacrifice!?

JM Yeah. They do it all the, man, they do this shit all the, don't fucking be so naive. Right, so basically it prompted like a mental, an emotional breakdown. So, he was in LA doing all these sessions with people, all different stuff, he was making a fortune. And he said he walked into this Hollywood mansion, whatever, and there was all these bodies rolling around on the floor with no clothes on. It was just Sodom and Gomorrah. And, er, he loved the music and all rest of it, blah, blah. And, anyway he come back, he didn't tell me at first what was really going on. And then what happened he couldn't sleep, different things, I think he'd been taking a lot of coke as well. So I was with him when he had a complete melt down. And, erm, he said, I'm gonna sell all my guitars. He had money, you know, he had a big house as well, in Kensal Rise. And, he said, I'm gonna sell all my guitars and I'm gonna get two taxis. I'm gonna drive one and rent one out. I'm giving up music, it's satanic. It's all satanic. And he says, they're trying to initiate you into this kinda music masonic thing. All this goes on. And he says, basically, I'll be fucking earning like millions of pounds a year, that's guaranteed. And he says, I was thinking about it. But some dude whispered in his ear, once you cross that line, there's no going back. Once you're in, there's no getting out. He says, it might be money, yeah, but you're gonna have to do what they want, you're gonna have to say what they want.

RB Who's in it then, this thing?

JM Well, [REDACTED] in it. There's quite a few. There's a lot of satanic shit goes on. And a lot of it's really about control, and blackmail. You know, that's the way politics is now. Whether you believe it or not. There's this book, I got one of these books for Tim, last time I saw Tim, about 2 or 3 weeks ago, I got him this book. I thought if anyone needs it, he does. And I said, read it. And I bet he doesn't.

It's a great book actually 'cos it's like pamphlets, it's a pamphletty type book. And in there, I don't know if you've heard of him, the Dutch banker Ronald Bernard? He was like right at the top of banking, you know, industry working for

billionaires and the whole thing. And he did an expose, saying that it's a big club, and what you have to do is you have to sacrifice children and, they film it. Again, everybody is compromised. You know, everyone's got shit on everybody. Right, so basically once you're in, you can't leave. And he said, when it came to his time to do it, he couldn't do it. And he had a complete melt down. Then he was in hiding for 8 years. Then he's done 2 interviews. He was in hiding 'cos they wanted to kill him. Because he knew shit. He's whistle blowed, yeah. So, he's only actually done 2 interviews that you must watch, right. And he doesn't do anymore because, as he says, he's said everything he needs to say. Well, some of his interviews are in this book. He'll tell you about what goes on, what really goes on behind the scenes with the so-called elite. And how they keep control. And, they're satanic, they're Satanists. They are practicing Satanists. And the other thing is, they got a body, a body specialist, and they said that guy is one hundred percent telling the truth. But lots of people just don't want to acknowledge what really goes on.

Yeah, so Kevin had a breakdown, and he said was giving it all up, so he did. And then the next thing you know, he gets involved in like kinda Buddhism right. And the next thing you know he turns up, he says, you know Sandie Shaw? She's into this Buddhism as well, and he said he was chatting to her, and she wants to do an album. So, I'm just gonna do that one album, he says. And basically, she's doing Morrissey songs, recording them. So, he done the album, produced it or most of it, Morrissey as well as the Smiths songs. And she did a showcase at Ronnie Scotts. And I went, he asked me to go, so I went along. And then Morrissey was there, you know, he was pally with Sandie Shaw as well, so we met Morrissey. And the next thing you know, Kevin does the new Morrissey, solo album. You know, he co-wrote that with Morrissey. And that's how he got back playing. [...] And he got rid of the taxis. He just sorta got back into producing, and writing, and session music.

[...]

You know, dealing with CO2, it's all a lie, the whole thing's a fucking lie. I mean Bill Gates has got six aeroplanes, private aeroplanes. And these are the ones telling us we're going to have to have less, we're gonna have to, you know,

have no heat. We're gonna have to have this, we're gonna eat bugs, we're not gonna, you know, artificial meat. While, you know, Prince Charles or whatever his name is behind this as well, in a big way. You know, he gets all his food grown at Highgrove or whatever. You know, the hypocrisy! You know, Al Gore, you know what I mean? Erm, and it's really weird 'cos the guy who started Greenpeace, I wish everybody would just listen to him for just one hour, Patrick Moore.⁷ And he is a climatologist and a biologist. And he grew up in a very isolated part of British Columbia, on a peninsula, you know.

He started Greenpeace, he did save whales, he did stop the seal pups getting battered. You know, he's done real things. He was on the Rainbow Warrior went it blew up. Listen to what he says about the environmental movement, it's a hybrid of communism and fascism. And it's all lies. And he will explain it clearly with diagrams and everything. Real studies that show you real facts, that ice caps are growing, right, but they have cycles where some areas will melt. It's natural, right? And that's all they're concentrating on. And as he's says, it's grown five times more over the west side. And glaciers, he's gone that's what glaciers do. They melt.

[1h. 16mins. > 1h. 22mins. JM continues assertions about current and historical, cyclical climate change with a focus on Greenland.]

JM The climate, it's gonna stabilise, on its own, in the next 2 or 3 years, it will. It's going that way. But they'll say it's because they've saved it, you know, with the CO₂. All CO₂, right, gets absorbed. It doesn't hang around. Methane dissipates in the atmosphere. Hydrogen, what they're now calling hydrogen and all this to do with farms, right, they been using that since, since farming began. And all it is, is compost. But they're giving it this name, you know, it's fucking compost man. And they're saying, like that's the killer. It's fucking mad. I mean, there is no excess CO₂. There's not. It gets completely absorbed. And as Patrick Moore said, the earth is greener now than it has been for 200 years. And also, one of the volcanos in Iceland pumps out more CO₂ in a week, right, than we've done since we've been on earth. [...]

RB Just one question on posting, you're 61, you've done this for 30 years, what do you see as the future, how long are you going to go?

JM I can't imagine not working. If this continues, right, 'cos you don't know what Tim's gonna do. I mean, he's getting

older, and I'm sure he's in a comfortable place now. He doesn't need all the anxiety. And I think Tim does it out of a sense of loyalty sometimes, to the staff. Yeah, 'cos he knows so many people are dependent on him. And I think it's loyalty to the people. Tim's like that you know, he's got a lot of good qualities, you know, Tim, he's very driven. You know, and he doesn't take prisoners, and he doesn't have to, you know what I'm saying. He won't be anyone's fool. But he's always had this loyalty. I mean he's put up with shit from me. Hopefully, I think we might move out right, 'cos say we get what we get for this. And I haven't, I paid the mortgage, so what it used to be, I was putting away money every month. I'm a squanderer, so what I had to do was get a certain amount of my salary into a savings thing by direct debit so I wouldn't spend it, 'cos I would. And when the mortgage ended, I wondered whether I could send all that into savings. So I've got this [the flat] plus a few other quid to, you know.

AB You've won Jimmy, you've won the game of life.

RB I've got less than I started with!

JM I wouldn't say that. Basically, what happened was, me and Steve Gent were living in Albert Street right, doing the postering. And, Tim said if we could get all the club stuff, 'cos there was Martin, there was a couple of people out there, it wasn't just Martin. Martin was like, leave him, leave him. And I was like, well, that's half the city, you know. And Tim said if you can get all the club stuff you can have it. You can have the money. Right, so we went for it. We got everything. We got the lot. Well, we did stuff for free. And we did it cheaper than everyone else. But man, me and Steve, we were making like five hundred a week, each, in club money. We weren't even touching our wages sometimes. And we were living in that little flat. And I noticed that prices were going up, it was just looking in the window and, fuck, they're racing up these things. In Leith, of all places. And I just come in one day and said to Steve, you know what? I'm gonna buy a flat, you know, we can do that. And he said, I've never really thought about it but why not? I said, well, you can always give it up and go back to renting. But I said it's worth a try isn't it.

So, I started looking, and then I got a lawyer. A property lawyer, who was really good actually. And she was almost

7 Patrick Albert Moore: industry consultant, former activist, an early member and past president of Greenpeace Canada.

near retirement, back then, 25 years ago. And she was quite a lawyer, on Charwood Place, she had American law, she was Scottish but she had American law and all that. You should've seen the office man, she had this huge, you know them big houses. A huge living room. And she had like, two flags, she had the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes. And a big fucking mahogany fucking Arthur Negus desk, you know what I mean. And she was quite like a Miss Jean Brodie type, mid 60s, but she kinda took a liking to me for some reason.

So, she was helping me every way she could. And I kept putting bids in, everything was 'offers over', and each time you put an offer in you need a surveyor, and I must've done about 8. And I wasn't getting anywhere. And I said, am I offering enough? She said, I've said to you that was a good offer but they're just moving so quickly. And she said five years ago you would've got a fixed price, but you don't see them anymore. 'Cos everyone's like hedging their bets on 'offers over'. And there was one on Lower Park Terrace, right on Arthur's Seat, you know. There's nothing in front of you, just the park. That was 3 bedrooms. And I put in an 'offer over' that was a bit more than I could afford. But I didn't get it. And she says, my god, I really thought you'd get that.

This went on for about 3 or 4 months. And in the meantime, Steve said, he didn't do anything, he grew up in Fife but he said as a kid they used to come to Edinburgh. And his grandad used to take him down Portobello, they used to have a little fairground down there, it's gone now but there used to be waltzers and all that. He said, me grandad used to always get me those windmills of candy floss and I'd go on the waltzers when I come to Edinburgh, 'cos it's so close. And he said he always liked Joppa.⁸ And he says, there's a flat there, I think I might go and look at it. So, he went and looked at this flat, right on the beach, first floor. And he said, ach, I just put a shitty offer in. And he put in, I think it was 46, 43 thousand, two bedrooomed, it was small but right on the beach. He didn't come anywhere near, right. So, the first person, pulled out. The one that got it, changed their mind, just before you could, fucked off. The second person had now found another place. The third person didn't respond. It got down to, Steve was about the 6th offer, 43. I think the top offer was like 58 or something. And the woman who had the flat had to accept it 'cos she was leaving the country. So, Steve got the flat for nothing basically.

So, we're in Albert Street, and we're renting a flat off his mate, Craig, I think we were paying about 200 pound a month

or something silly, each, but it was still nothing, even then. So, Steve got that flat, and he says, well I'll be moving out. And he said, why don't you move in with me. 'Cos that's it, that was the deal, I was going for a 2 bedroom, he was going for a 2 bedroom. He wasn't even trying. And I said when I get mine you can move in with me, 'til you get sorted, I won't charge you any rent, just stay there, you know. But it was him who got it out of the blue. And he'd only looked at one place, and he got it. It was where he wanted.

I moved in there and I said to the lawyer, my mate moved and I'm staying there now. And she said, what I'll do, very rarely a fixed price comes up, but I'll start asking around, she was going out of her way. She wasn't getting paid to do that. And she said when they do come up, they don't even get in the window, someone knows and the next afternoon they're gone. In Scotland, it's first there. You can't be gazumped. And in Scotland you can write on a piece of paper the price, alls you have to do is write the price, the address, the person signs it, you sign it, and that's a legal document. No one can come in later and say, I'll give you double. Right, she explained that again and said remember to get that piece of paper if anything comes up. Anyway, this come up. [...] 64 thousand, fixed price, erm, they've got to move. And she said, if I know, other people know, where are you now? I said I'm literally 10 minutes away. She said, go there now because there's a fucking load of people on their way.

So, I go there and I knocked on the door and it was the grandad. The parents were at work. Or the mother was down at their new house. [...] And I said, am I first? And he said, yeah, come in. He said, 64 thousand. And I said, yeah. He said, don't you wanna have a look around? And we had a little sweep round. 2 bedrooms and one of them, there was bunk beds in there, and I remember these little boys, one of them grabbed my arm and was taking me round. They obviously knew they were having problems trying to move. And the grandad said, do you wanna do the thing? I said, yeah yeah. So, we did the piece of paper. And as I was going out there was a couple buzzing the buzzer. I beat them by literally 10, 15 minutes. And then I phoned up the solicitor, she said, have I got the piece of paper? I says yeah. She said, bring it here now. Right now.

[1h. 36m. 06s. > 1h. 38m 41s.
JM talks about his home improvements]

8 Joppa is an eastern suburb of Edinburgh, capital of Scotland.

JM So, it's probably worth about 300 now. But, yeah, I wanna get out.

[1h. 38m. 30s. > 1h. 41m. 30s. JM talks about his plans for a new place in the country and how he wants to grow veg. and herbs and see out his days there but coming into Edinburgh 3 or 4 days a week to put posters up.]

JM But the [Keith] Harvey yeah, the Harvey stuff was quite weird.⁹ Erm, there was always run-ins with him, right, I remember. And what happened was...

AB The Ballerina?

JM Well, he had a couple of flats in Soho, he had a dance school, that's why they called him Ballerina, but he was a body builder. You know, he was a pumping iron guy. He also had an equity card and was in a couple of Sweeney episodes being a bank robber. One of those guys with a stocking over his head, getting battered by like John Thaw or whatshisname. You know, six big heavy guys getting smashed to fuck by John Thaw. It's funny, them fight scenes were funny weren't they? They were so ridiculous.

Yeah, so Harvey was this like Soho character, and he had about three [fly-posting] jobs and they were all fashion magazines, that I remember, that's all he had. And, er, what he was trying to do was get money out of Tim. And he put himself forward as, well, your lot are all art student wanky types and I'm a bit of a Don of Soho, you know, man about Soho, it's my turf. So, there was an aspect of that for sure, you know, who are these? And I wonder if I can squeeze some money out of 'em. I think that was his initial thing. But what happened was, it was Tony O'Brien that got whacked over the 'ead.

Tony O'Brien, he worked way back, man, way back. I mean we're going back again, I mean 27 years or so.¹⁰ And what happened was he was doing something and they picked his bucket up and they whacked him across the head, he got a big scar, and there was a metal staircase and he went flying down the metal staircase and they threw the bucket and paste down on him when he was down the staircase. And this had been building up, you know, and I remember Tim saying, Tony O'Brien's been attacked. And I was, alright, you know. And he said would you come down here? I'd done this before, right, and he said, would you come down? One of the things that happened before, with Harvey, I was with Mark French, for example, and we were in that pick-up, remember? And we were just doing DCs,

you know, we'd have that rack full of DCs.¹¹ Round Soho, and we'd go round and round covering Harvey up, day in, day out, you know. And one time he was at Cambridge Circus, there's about 5 or 6 boxes there, right, and we come round and there was Harvey doing all the boxes, we'd done earlier that morning. It was just him, actually, and he just had enough posters, you know, he'd just come to do that really. And his lock-up was only like ten minutes away anyway. So, we were driving and I was like, uh oh, there's Harvey there. And as you come across there's like some boxes you can't see, you know, as you come round. And I said to Mark, I'm gonna run round, watch this, so I run round, as Harvey was moving on, he didn't look back. I was ready to leg it, but he didn't look back. And as he's on his last box I've covered all the other six again, right, and fucking ran round the corner and run back round, with Mark, right, and we're standing there looking and then Harvey turns round and sees all the boxes have fucking been changed, right behind his back. And he's looking, like that [bemused], you know what I mean? We're watching him and he's like, where are you? And then he peels them all off, obviously, but it was just to freak him out really.

Another freak out we did, which was only about a week later, we used to, you know, was it Seven Dials was it called? With the 7 roads, right, we used to do all round there. Now his lock up was like a back end of somewhere, on one of them alleys, one of the most alleyway type ones. Right? And, anyway, so we're coming up, Mark was driving, and I kinda jump out and look 'cos we knew we were near his unit, right, and Harvey's van was there, his white Transit van was there, with the doors open. And he was loading the posters, right, so he'd put about 5 packs in, them brown packets of posters in and he, he sort of disappeared. And I said, Mark, Mark, drive down man. So, Mark drove down, I jumped out and fucked the 5 packets of posters in the back of the van, into me pick-up, and we drove off. Right, and we went round the corner, I said, come back, I've gotta watch this. We went right back round the block again, and got out like, and put our heads round the corner, and we waited. He'd been gone about 20 minutes actually. And he come out, and he's looking like that, again, and he's looking up and down the road.

9 'The Ballerina' aka Keith Harvey was infamous for his speedy and persistent fly-posting esp. in London.
10 The major fly-posting rivalry with Harvey came to a head late 1994 and culminated in confrontation Summer 1995.
11 DCs abbr. for Double Crown (30"x20") size posters.

So, we had some stories. There was many occasions like that, you know. Erm, but then it really got nasty. Er, I was up here and then Tim phoned me and said, a couple of people had been attacked, Tony O'Brien quite badly, you know. And then he goes, would you come down and do this again? And I'm like, are you fucking serious? He says, no, no, he says, I've got a plan. So, I said, alright. I came down and, remember the guy who was into erm, Kung Fu and everything? He says, I want you to take him round, right, and show him the round. He'd never done it ever before, he ended up in Cardiff and everything. And show him round, so I did that. And then it got, you know, there was a bit of a scene. So, I come back and I said, it's gonna get really nasty, I said, as soon as they see us, anything to do with us it's attack mode. I said, and they look like bouncer types. And he said, alright, alright. I said, I'm not sure Tim, you know, it's gonna get violent. And he said, what do we do then? I said, I dunno, I s'pose we just got to make sure there's two people, and someone's gotta watch.

So, I carried on doing that with that lad, and about a week later, there was another incident with someone, you know, not us but someone else. And Tim said I've been speaking to Billy Corraall, you know he was a bit of an amateur boxer and all that, and he trains kids and all that. I said yeah. He said he knows a guy called Bobby Goldsmith, he's a bare knuckle prize fighter, he said, would you meet him? And maybe go out with him, and he can look after ya? Like, if anything happens, you know. I said, alright. So I met this Bobby. Who was completely, you know, like out of Lock Stock and Barrel fucking movies. Just like, if he wasn't in 'em, he should've been. So, I met Bobby, and he's like, 'alright alright geezer alright?' Yeah, yeah. And he did all different jobs, for example, he was a minder, talking of fucking Dennis Waterman. And he did things like carry cash around in briefcases for people. And chauffeur people. But he was handy as well, you know? So he used to do this kind of chauffeuring thing for various people, and carry cash around for various people. So, he's going, let's go out there. Right, I said, I'll drive 'cos I knew the run. And he says, tell me what this is all about. So we're driving round Soho, the usual places, West End and that. I said, see these? And he's, ah yeah, I've always noticed 'em, fucking hell man, is there money in this game then? This poster game, I didn't know there was any, he says, you know I've often looked at those and I've never thought anything about it, never thought there'd be like, geezers have to, you know, money and all that for this. Protection racket thing, you know. Erm, 'cos that was where it was going, it was like, give us money now, and we'll stop,

right. And I think, and I think actually Tim and Pete the Plumber actually gave money to John Curd as well and Harvey to go away. They did, I know they did. But it got even worse. And they were saying something like, we want that every three months. Not a one off. That's every three months.

So that's when Bobby's there, right. So were driving round, I'm showing him, I said, you see all them ripped now, they're all ripped, they just ripped them deliberately. I just said, they're really making it look a mess as well. I said, I'll get out now and fix them. So I was explaining, driving round. And he's going, alright then, I'll see you tomorrow. And I said, you drive then, he knew the streets anyway, if you're not sure I'll just say, Long Lane next or whatever. And I'll jump out and I'll fix them. We were doing that about three days, literally three days. I was getting on with him, he was a real nice guy, really got a lot of charisma, you know, really interesting guy. And a nice guy as well actually. He was telling me all kinds of like crazy stories, you know, about his life. He had nine kids as well. And he was only, I'd say he was early 40s then. In fact, his eldest boy started working for Tim.

And one day we arrived at, you know Holborn? You know that one way system that comes down, and goes like that, it's four lanes, and two go left and two go right, and there's all these pillars. So, I come down, I said, oh fuck, they were wrecked, they were all wrecked, the pillars, the lot. I said, we're gonna be here a while, you know. I said, just wait in the van man and I'll go over, I'll be backwards and forwards 'cos I'll probably need more paste, more posters. So, I just gone over there, right, and I'd just finished one pillar, and I'm starting the next pillar. Right, and this guy tapped me on the shoulder, and he only said two things, two words, but I knew straight away he was a scouser. He said, ay mate. That's all he had to say but I knew. He tapped me like that and went, ay mate. And I turned round, I said, what? And he went, fuck off. And he was a bouncer, from the Astoria, he was one of John Curd's bouncers, 'cos he used to do the Astoria, and he was, he was a big meaty doorman, scouse cunt, you know. And he took me off me feet, I went flying, on the floor, and my nose just went [explosive sound], my nose was pouring like a tap, I was covered. And he just casually walked over to me as I was laying on the deck. He came down, like this, he sorta knelt down, like, to give me a few more. And as he knelt down I wrapped my arms and my legs around him, like a fucking bear hug, and somehow I flipped him round on the side, and I'm lying there but he flips me back over and I'm just holding on, for fucking dear life, you know my

legs and my ankles, I just couldn't let him go. And I think I had more strength 'cos of the adrenalin, as well, you know, I'm just holding on. And he flips me back down again and my face is like completely squashed on the pavement, you know, and he gets another dig in my ribs kind of thing and I managed to get, lock his arm again, and I'm thinking, where the fuck is Bobby? And as my head is squashed on the floor like that Bobby's trying to get across the traffic, he's in the middle of the traffic trying to dodge cars as I'm lying down. The he gets over and as he comes over this guy, I can see Bobby, but this guy can't, right and as he comes over he just leans down and he does something to this guy's neck, and it was a stun gun. So, he zapped him on the neck with this stun gun, and he rolled off me, right, and then he went over and he got him again, right there, in the neck again. And the guy was kind of crawling off. I mean he got him really heavy, right, and he's crawling off and he kinda sort of stands up and he's kind of wobbling, and he's trying to speak but he can't speak. He's trying to say something, like you're getting it now or something, but he couldn't speak. He's standing there and I looked and there's a black BMW car with the door open, and I thought, that's his motor, and I got the paste bucket and threw it all over the dashboard, of his car, you know, what was left of the paste.

Right, and we got in the car, and my nose was still bleeding, you know, and I was starting to talk [nasal], my voice went like that, and Bobby's going, are you alright? I said, yeah. And he says, you've got a couple of eyes coming up as well. So I had two black eyes, coming from this one punch, right. And he says, what do we do now? And I said, well, let's go to Hammersmith and check Hammersmith. And he said, are you serious? I said, yeah. And I said, I said, we'll come back later and fix this lot. And he said, after that? I said there's no way I'm giving up now. I'm more determined. Believe me, I said, I'm not fucking going home tonight.

So, we did. And the funny thing is is about an hour later, erm, Tim just phoned. And it was Myles, Myles phoned, right, Tim was in Glasgow. And Tim and Myles were probably thinking, we'll give Jimmy a call just to see how he's getting on. So it was Myles who originally phoned, saying, oh I'm with Tim, we're just wondering how you were getting on? I said, well, we've just had a bit of a scene. I said, it was heavy. I said I've got two black eyes and probably a broken nose. And he went, really? I said, yeah, and Tim come on, and I said I'd just had this situation at Holborn. So, at the end of the evening, erm, Bobby said, this is a bit more than I thought. He said, I just thought we were chasing people away who were

ripping your posters. He said, actually I know people who could get this dealt with really quickly, he says, if it's gonna be like that. He said, I think there's gonna be more. He's wanting revenge. He said you can see he wants more. And he said, I know people who run all the doors in Soho. And he says, they'll put anything to bed. And I said, well, it's not my decision, you know, blah, blah.

So Tim got back, the following Monday I said to Tim, er, you know I was down about four weeks, during this and I said to Tim, you know I still had the black eyes and whatever and I said, Bobby's saying he knows people who could probably deal with this very quickly, you know. And I said, what do you think? And he said, well, get Bobby to talk to me. So, Bobby come in and he said, oh this guy Poli the Greek, he runs all the doors all over the place. And this guy Tim is his second in command, this big Jamaican guy. And they know everyone, and they can just get it stopped but you'll probably have to pay them. And Tim said, oh, I'll think about that but he said, can I just have another word with [Jimmy]...? And Bobby went, yeah, okay and he walked out. And Tim said, what do you think? And Tim said, these guys he's talking about, what's to stop them taxing us? He said, maybe they'll get a hint of something. You don't know do ya? You know, who're you getting in bed with kind of thing. And he said, well I'll speak to Billy again. So, he spoke to Billy Corrall again and Billy said that these guys are really good. And that they work for like fucking celebrities and all different people and they've got a good reputation. They get well paid but they're happy with that. They're like old school, whatever, gentlemen fucking gangsters, whatever that means.

So, I think Tim met them and did the deal. A cash thing, you know, so much a day, 'til it was over. And, erm, and then I met them. Yeah, you know, there was, the Greek guy, Poli, as he was called, that was his surname but it was Poli... (garbled 'Greek') 15, 16 letters. He said, ah, this could be a laugh, I wanna have a look at this. You know, it was a bit below him but, he was, I'll have a look at this. And then we met the Jamaican guy, 7ft Jamaican. Huge guy again, they were massive, these two. Like I say, we had to put like armchairs, literally armchairs in the back of the van. So we drove round, and again, Bobby's explaining as well 'cos he gets it now. He's doing all the driving, I'm doing the job, I'm the bait, right. So, he's gone, alright, okay. And so, I go, oh look, there's Harvey. This had went on for about a week and a half and he was ripping and then the ripping stopped. And Tim said, we'll just keep going for a week, you know. And there was no ripping at all, that week.

And then it was Long Lane again, isn't it a bar down there, whathisname, the guy who used to have the hair. It was like this famous bar that every cunt used to go to... Stringfellows. I think that was down there right, and I went, look, there's Harvey there. And he went, is that him is it? I've seen him, this is Poli, he said, stop here, right, to Bobby. So Poli and this [Jamaican] Tim get out. And they go over, and they just grab Harvey man and take him down this alleyway. And, and, as he's taking him, he's going to me... [beckoning gesture] you know what I mean, this Greek guy.

So, we go down and they've got Harvey, and he says, he says he's got a twin brother! Ah this Tim's got him now, and he comes up and Poli goes, he said his name's not Keith Harvey, he says his name's Tom Harvey, and he's Keith's twin brother. And I laughed and I said, I said, yeah, that's him. And he says, shall we take him in the van somewhere? What shall we do? I said, just tell him that, to fuck off, leave us alone. And, if not, right, you're gonna break his legs. Right, if we see him again. So don't do nothing now, right. And they're giving it the whole act, right. And I'm standing at the end of the lane, and like Harvey sheepishly goes in the opposite direction. And he gets back in [the van] and he says, I think that's that sorted. I said, I think so, yeah. And he said, but we've agreed to do 'til the end of the week. I think this was a Wednesday, the next day we bumped into John Curd. Right, whose bouncer it was, you know. And he jumped in this car. And we followed him to Brent Cross, that's how far we tailed him. And I said [laughing], I said he's going up the M1. He's shitting himself. 'Cos he'd teamed up with Harvey. Right? And then, at the end of that week, I think it was 3 weeks with them. It was a week before, and then 3 weeks with them. And that was it. It all stopped. That was the end of it all. And, erm, we never had any more trouble after that.

And those guys were sound, you know. And Tim was happy with it all. They were saying if you ever have any problems, let us know. So, after me getting the punch on the nose there was never any more violence after that. Which is what we wanted, you know. Anywhere, against us, or against them. 'Cos I didn't want that. Even though they were willing to do it to us, I didn't want to be involved in that. And they said, no, we're not gonna touch anyone unless you say. Unless I say!?

We had some things up here as well. [Chat about Electra.¹² Who looks after the dog if they're both away, going to a wedding in Loch Lomand and a picture of Jimmy in a kilt...]

'S funny that, where I grew up in Kirby, ducking and diving wasn't a life choice, it was a survival choice. Oh yeah, there was all the Inspector Bruce Johnson stuff. Detective Chief Inspector Bruce Johnson.¹³ Who Irvine Welsh's book is based on. Filth, yeah. Because the copper in Filth was a young Bruce. And the character's Bruce. And Kenny, who knows him, I met him a few times with Kenny. And he said, yeah, it's well known that Bruce Johnson had a black book on all the judges and all the top people. You know, like taking coke, and the prostitutes and all of it. He had dirt on them all. So he felt like he could do what he wanted. And in the end it was the Glasgow police that, Bruce Johnson was definitely a corrupt policeman. And he got retired, early, on his pension. 'Cos they felt that's the only way they felt they could deal with him. 'Cos they said he had a dead man's thing or whatever, he'd blow the whistle on a lot of things. A lot of corruption.

And basically he had plain clothes police chasing us around. And then he kinda got involved. And when the festivals started, obviously we were up and everything, so he personally got really involved. And one day, one time he managed to come to the yard, I wasn't there, and empty it of all the posters. Like him and two or three plain clothes, young detectives, you know. And then, so we got all the posters back, got everything re-printed, whatever it was. And then he came down again, there was four of them, Bruce and 3 others. And as he came down, our landlord was there, Mick, Mick Hughes the decorator, decorating company, but he owned all the other units. And as he came in, we weren't there and the door was locked, so he went into Mick's office and said, give me the key, you're the landlord, I wanna key for the, and he said, where's your warrant? And he said, here just give me the key. And he said, get off my property unless you've got a warrant.

Mick said he came out of the office and walked them to the yard and as they were, he says, I wanna show you something, and he says I walked them into the street and I just locked the gates, behind 'em, and said, fuck off until you've got a warrant. And he phoned me, he's telling me on the phone, he says, so they've just left, and he said, hang on a minute, actually they're hiding round the back of the dockers, they're waiting for one of yous to come back, so don't come to the yard. And I'll let you know when they've left. I'll let you know when it's safe to come back.

¹² JM's partner.

¹³ Irvine Welsh is reported to say that the inspiration for his character Detective Sergeant Bruce Robertson in Filth was a former colleague at Edinburgh City Council.

So, all that was going on. And as soon as Dave Hall found out, he left. He left, never to be seen again. He was becoming this like overlord, he was chasing that role. And not only that, he was trying to undermine us, to justify his role, which wasn't nice. We had a row in the yard, a bad one, right. And there was a big bucket of that white paste there and I booted it and it went all over him. Dave Hall, right. And I went, right you fucker, and you think you're a fucking football hooligan. And I had the red mist, I said, I'll fucking, come on... And anyway, he ended up, soon as the police [became involved] the daddy fucked off. He never came back, while that was happening. After being like, I can do this, I can do that, I'll face anyone. He just buggered off and never came back.

Erm, and then what happened was 'bout a week later I got a knock on the door, half two in the morning, right. And Electra heard it and she said, there's a knock on the door, maybe it's one of the neighbours or something. And actually, we did have Eileen's husband at that time had cancer and we knew he was gonna pass away. And we thought it was him. He did pass away but it was round that time, he did a few weeks later. So we opened the door. The reason we thought it was Eileen because you have to buzz to get in. Someone had got in. I opened the door and there was a police woman and a policeman standing there. And they went, er, do you know a vehicle, blah, blah, blah, blah? And I said, yeah. And they said, it's been broken into. I said, really? And they said, you better come and have a look.

So, it was parked down the end of the road, you know. And I come down and the passenger window was smashed. But what was odd was in the footwell, of the passenger seat, I'm not joking man, there was a thousand A2s. I mean the weekly collection of Ripping Records, the whole collection right was in the well. And there was, if you counted them, probably a thousand. We'd got 12, 15 jobs. You know 80s, 50s, 100s. And there wasn't one poster there, and there wasn't one poster flying around the links. Do you know what I mean? You know, like some drunks gone, oh, maybe I want one of those posters. And I was like, there's something wrong here. And the first thing is, that van wasn't registered to me, it was registered to [REDACTED], right, in London. So, I said straight away, I've got to ask you, how the hell did you know to knock on that door? Flat 3? I said 'cos that vehicle's not registered to me.

And then one of them walks away, they hadn't even done the check, d'you understand? They hadn't even checked the

address. They'd done what they'd done, taken all the posters out. Or maybe Johnson done that and sent them round to me. [...] So how the fuck did you know what door to come to? And they said, is there anything missing? I said, you know what's missing, I said, and the funny thing is they're not flying all around the grass, which you'd expect, I said, clean as a whistle isn't it? And they both walked off and the policewoman, they're saying, it's registered to someone in London. And I said, yeah, yeah.

And he said, okay then, what are you gonna do? And I said, I'll just put, I'll get a poster, and some tape and seal the window up. And he said, okay, we'll just be off then. I said, where are you going? I said, what about my incident number? They said, what incident number? I said, for the insurance, you know, for the glass. And I said, remember it's not in my name. They said, you don't need... I said, give me an incident number. They were walking as well, I said, are you walking back to the police station? Then I'll come with ya. And so, again, they went and had a little conference and come back with the incident number. Right, as if like, the whole thing stunk. You know what I'm getting at? Johnson done it. And then sent them to sort of, you know, take the piss. So then I know that Johnson knows exactly where I live.

Then not long after that, the cars come. Two cars with the beatbox fucking cars, with the young people in it throwing, literally throwing dog shit at the window. And it's [makes car horn beeping noises] the neighbours and all that. 'Cos we have quite good neighbours, you know, and we've always been quite alright. They sort of know what I do, or what I did, and now they know it's all like what it is now. So, yeah, that started. You know, the kind of like, the Neds or whatever you want to call it.¹⁴ And even that to me, I'm thinking I you bet he's like, 'cos he used to tax, Johnson used to tax them the brothels. You know, get money off them. And the drug dealers. He knows who they all are. So I was thinking that, like these lads, he'd bust for Es probably. And then he's saying like, right, if you do this.¹⁵ Again, that's what I thought. And I managed to, 'cos they were all in disguise if you like, and cars I didn't recognise, because I tried.

And then I clocked one of them. I thought, I know who that is. And I went and knocked on his door. And I said, what the

¹⁴ 'NED' abbr. for Non Educated Delinquent. Scottish slang for a hooligan / lout.
¹⁵ Intimidate JM by throwing dog mess at his home front windows.

fuck's going on? I said, are you in bed with Johnson? And he went, what are you talking about? I said, I said, I know where you live now. I said, guess what I'm gonna be doing tonight? I said, see those windows? Know what I mean. And this guy's standing there, and I said, I'll see you later then. And I walked off. And then everything stopped again. No more shit on the windows. That was like every other night, you know. It happened like 5 or 6 times. Electra's freaking out. I'd got a baseball bat at this point, right? And I did come running out in the street a few times but, you know, they were gone. Again, it's like, again, it's all theatre, isn't it? A lot of it. Thankfully.

So, we had that. And we had that big scouse cunt on the bridges. Took a run at me and then stopped. And then said it was too public a place. I never ever physically saw him again as well. I think he was just here on a visit and, or doing something in the club. I don't think he lived here actually.

And the guy who was noising me up, had a club, called Lift, it was called Lift at Wilkie House. And I think he probably said to this scouse, you know or whatever, I'll sort him out. But, it didn't happen, I suppose, again thankfully. They, they, he became Out Of Hand this guy. And then he sold Out Of Hand to the Bristol lads.

RB So, Out Of Hand were here before Bristol?

JM Yeah, yeah, he started it years ago. The guy, going back 20, over 20 odd years he started the company. I'd have to ask Steve, you know, it's on the tip of me tongue again, you know, I was thinking about it but I still can't remember.

AB Yeah, 'cos Out Of Hand have actually created their own narrative.

JM Yeah, but I knew it. I knew it. I used to say his name every day. Because he'd been fucking ripping and fucking about with us. Just this one guy. And then there was George Duffin, remember George Duffin? He died. Yeah. He died about four years ago. In fact I was speaking to him the day before he died. And he didn't look right either. 'Cos I noticed he had all that white stuff, you know, that white stuff that people get? The frothing at the mouth. And he was dead the next day. But he was a local, he did all the indoors stuff. And he was a promoter as well.

So he had the indoor club work, which they used to do a lot. Right, he had 4 or 5 people working for him. And also, he

used to do all the stuff at, all the promotion at The Venue. He used to do other things, you know. He used to put quite good bands on in other places. I remember going to a lot of his things. Like, er, what's that Welsh band I really like? Super Furry Animals. I mean, that was a great gig. And that was George, he used to do that. And he was really posh, again, he was a, his parents, oh sorry, his, [he] comes from a really landed Scottish background. Duffin. They're an old family, in fact, they wouldn't crown kings of Scots without the Duffin saying he's legitimate. They were quite powerful. And they were in Africa, you know, Rhodesia as it would've been. And he had that massive flat down past Broughton Street, you remember that. 'Cos, when you're in there he had so much African stuff. Incredible stuff. And he was really into it, I mean, he had a black missus, you know. She was, er, Cuban. You know, a Caribbean Cuban lassie. But he was really into all that culture in a quite positive way really. I mean he had that, maybe his great grandparents didn't but he was quite, he used to put a lot of things on. Like he'd have the Bhundu Boys on and stuff. He did a lot of stuff but he was quite a character again, very posh, very Scottish and very posh, George.

He was a serious character. He said, in 1975 I was Scotland's disco, or 77, I was Scotland's disco dancing champion. And I can believe it, you know. This guy, again he died, he was like, 61, 62 when he died but I'd never known anyone who could take this much cocaine. And get away with it, you know. I can't go near it.

RB And he liked his Es didn't he, as well?

JM Yeah, everything. Everything. Especially, he sold cocaine, like a lot. He was making big bucks off it. And, yeah, got him in the end you could say. But he was funny, I remember, he said, this was about 1988 - Oh, I've gotta tell you about Hughie and The Venue and all that, but just as a side story, he says yeah, he says, I'm gonna do my dance, at The Venue, er, with Nick, Nick from Ripping used to do disco inferno. And he says, Nick's on tonight, I'm gonna recreate my dance. And he started it and within about 10 minutes he broke his fucking leg. Literally broke his leg. I mean he had a stookie on like for months afterwards. Proper broken leg. And as they were carrying him, he was off his nut as well, and he had to be carried out, right? And they carried him off the dance floor like, it was like shoulder height actually, I remember, as they were carrying him out he's gone like this to everybody, he's waving as they're taking him out to where the ambulance is coming.

Hughie was a character, again he took a shine to me and Steve, you know. This is all true man, you'd go in the venue, right, Monday eleven o'clock to pick up the weekly or monthly posters but we used to go every Monday 'cos there'd always be something, even if it was just one poster there'd be something. He'd be late fifties then and he was a sawn-off shot gun type of guy. And you'd go in, you go downstairs, 'cos there was upstairs but there was the down and his office. I'll tell you the thing I witnessed in his office one day, one night, er, and you go in there and he'd be like that, chopping up lines of cocaine, Monday morning and he'd have a big spliff at the same time. And he's, alright boys? Do you wanna come to thingy next week? Aye come down. And we used to get in for free to everything.

So, I remember we went to this gig, I'll tell you who it was actually, it was a really strange one-off thing. It was a Jamaican guy, right, and his name was, oh god, in fact when he was on he was saying he'd never been out of Jamaica, right. And these albums he had were in the 70s, so this is years later, you know. Dr Alimantado, best dressed chicken in the town albums, you know them dub albums? Him. So he was on tour, we went down and when we arrived, we just you know, we knew all the doormen, so we walked in and that and Hughie kind of appeared. And he went, Hey boys, in the office. And he's going, Stevie, you want one, want one? And Stevie was like, alright. We went into the office right and there was like, girls in there, let's put it that way. And, I think actually we were talking to someone and we said we'd be down in 5 mins. And he went, C'mon boys, c'mon. And five minutes later we come down, we walk in the office, right, and he's got, it's all over the place and everything, you know. It's fucking doughnuts, and chain smoking, why are you taking so much cocaine and joints as well? Anyway, he's there you go Stevie, here you go, you know what I mean. And then I looked at one point and there was a girl under the fucking desk giving him, actually, physically giving him a blow job. As he's talking to us. And I just thought, this is fucking, this...

And I just walked out, I just walked out. Again, you know, it can get too crazy for me. And I don't like it, you know. It doesn't endear me at all, it does the opposite, right. Fucking filthy bastard. And I said, fuck off you. And I remember walking, he thought it was funny, and I walked out. And then in the end, about three months later, Steve goes, have you seen the Sunday papers? I think it was the Scottish Daily Mail, he said, have a look at the front cover. It was all Hughie, the girls, the flats, the whores, the drugs.

And then, you know the middle pages thing, it was like four pages, right. And then his licence got revoked that Monday from The Venue. They did a hit job on him, you know, but he was funny. Again, these characters, you can't make them up. If he was himself in a film, it would be a hit. Right, guaranteed. The stuff that used to come out of his mouth spontaneously. He was funny a fuck.

And the other thing is, so, he had property and stuff. He had a nice house down the road there. And then Steve moved down the road, and got the booty van, erm. Steve got it set up like bacon rolls and all that. He had a perfect spot, he'd got the right location, got everything ready. And he was doing a bomb. In fact he was finishing a lot at eleven o'clock, 'cos he was selling out, you know. And then he would extend it a bit. It was the only place down there, it was such a big layby that you could get three like artic.s in there. So all the lorry drivers would stop, and it had toilets, it was the only place literally that had male and female toilets on the whole A1. That's the only place. So, it was the perfect spot, Steven was doing a bomb, was loving it. Anyway, he was only there about 2 or 3 weeks Steve, I'd go down once a week just to see him and have a bacon roll or whatever. And he said, guess who was here this morning? He said, Hughie. Yeah, he's got a house, just down the road. And he said, he's here every fucking day. He's just the same. And I said, how old is he now? He must've been getting on 70 but still completely like [caning it], some people just have that whatever it is.

So, he was interesting to know. And obviously Mick, Mick McWilliams who I saw recently, God again, he's 81 Mick and looks the same. And he was another one. How the fuck did they get away with it? And he's mellowed quite a lot but he was always alright. Again, he was all blustery but you just took the piss and he'd laugh, you know, he wouldn't take it as a personal insult. He'd laugh at you, he'd laugh with you. Again, a lot of them it was just the way they were. I mean, they weren't bad. I like Mick. I always liked him. I still do. I saw him fairly recently, had a nice chat, his son does a lot of stuff there now, and he's had the same manager for years, John. And he's taking more of a back seat, you know what I mean, now. It's still his club and everything. Well, he was saying like that things have changed so much. The dance scene is done. It's over. They do more live bands now. Which he likes. Which I've always liked. He never said, I'm not doing the business I used to but, heck he's a multi-millionaire. He did really well with The Liquid Rooms, on Victoria Street, it's four floors...

[JM ends the last 5 min.s of the recording session with
tales of good times spent on the Isle of Skye.]

ENDS

Transcribed by AB
(16,567 words)

NB: To retain the individual vocal quality of testimonies transcripts have been minimally edited, with redactions made only when personal or legally sensitive material demands. Occasionally words are spelt phonetically to convey a sense of participants' colloquial pronunciation. Often repeated 'in-between' words or 'place holders' - indexing witnesses' gathering their thoughts - are likewise faithfully reproduced to retain the pace and pauses, the musicality of participants' verbal expression. Memory, of course, is not a flawless process. Transcriptions have been fact checked to a degree. Misremembering one detail of an event or circumstance does not render the recollection invalid.



[FIG. 1]

[FIG. 1] JM in a spectacular landscape.

[FIG. 2] JM with paste mixing machine.

[FIG. 2]



UNCLE

PRESENTS

THE ART OF FLYING :

AN ONGOING ORAL HISTORY AND
MULTI-MEDIA RESEARCH INITIATIVE

This series of booklets shares for the first-time in-depth conversations with individuals whose involvement in unauthorised commercial fly-posting circa 1973 to '93 is deemed significant.

Transcribed conversations are each prefaced with a short introduction that explores broader material, social, ethical and political issues relevant to the subject of fly-posting in the city.

There are several stakeholders concerning the illegal display of commercial posters.

- (i) Entrepreneurial promoters and big corporations who commission the activity.
- (ii) Practitioners who put posters up.
- (iii) Individuals and agencies who take it upon themselves or are charged with enforcing laws against it.
- (iv) Finally, the urban dwellers who are either oblivious to fly-posting or variously informed, entertained, offended or intrigued by it.

Research began with MYLES COONEY's many decades of 'adventures' north of the border in Scotland. Next up, DAVE HALL's local Bradford and Leeds 'misdeeds' as well as accounts of fly-posting every capital city in Europe. JIMMY MILLER's wide-ranging memories, not least of confronting 'The Ballerina' - universally acclaimed as one of the finest with brush and pavste - were classic. Flautist DAVIE CARLTON's shift from musical protégé to master baker to fly-poster was a journey.

PETER BRIGHTON shared tales of working on the streets, post WWII fly-posting history and his famous maxim, "We don't mind competition. But we just won't stand for it." JIMMY WREN told fascinating, sometimes hairy tales of Birmingham and beyond. Promoter and printer Dave Hutton reminded us that Fred 'Spider' Rowe - Ian Dury's sometime minder - covered his van shelves with pink faux fur to stop posters slipping around. MANDY BROWN shared her memories and adventures fly-posting in West Yorkshire and beyond. Tracking down and talking with Trotskyist music collective inspired ANTHONY 'TOSH' RYAN in Crete took us from the 1960s Manchester Jazz scene to Tarantinoesque activity that curtailed his posting days in the 1980s. Interviewing DAVE WALKER - ably assisted by Paul Carr - was a roller coaster, and great to hear from half of Slater & Walker, for our intents and purposes, one of 'the originals'. JOHNNY MURPHY had a stranded Christmas tree delivery to thank for his life as a fly-poster. KEVIN THOMAS went from a teen flogging tat in shop doorways to luxury car sales, then an eight pounds a day, two days a week wage at Slater & Walker, to eventually running the whole show. LOL MOORE loved doing Notting Hill Carnival, not so much wintertime breaking the ice on the paste when it had frozen overnight in the van.

The oral histories collected since 2023 illuminate aspects of an industry hitherto enveloped in secrecy. While accounts unfold, we are also made critically aware of the changing face of cities across the UK: the many and diverse music scenes; variations in public attitudes; policing and the law; council corruption, condemnation and eventual cooperation; the bitter rivalries and competition for wall space and wider territories. There's also the laughs and life-long friendships made along the way.

THE ART OF FLYING

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