



THE ART OF FLYING

1 QUAKER STREET

31ST OCTOBER - 4TH NOVEMBER 2025

INTERVIEW WITH

KEVIN THOMAS

8

Introduction

URBAN AMBIENCES AND FLYING THE CITY

05

Shoreditch. The City edge still reads as edgy. It gets a lot of traffic, and feels as tidal as the Thames. Silicon Roundabout is a death star drawing everything into its digital orbit, a virtual signifier in a Lime bike choked material world. The A10, the Great Cambridge Road to the once prosperous Hansa port of King's Lynn, only connects, something with the next to nothing of Norfolk, marshland to marshland. Here too the London Overground runs alongside the weed-strewn, overgrown remains of the old East London 'Underground' Line and its shuttered, graffiti-splattered station on Pedley Street - the area once a damp and vaporous haunt of footpads and prostitutes and the gangland country of the Krays, the nearby Carpenter's Arms on Cheshire Street more lock, stock and two smoking barrels than lock-ins.

The railway arch beside the entrance to Shoreditch High Street Station, Windrush branch but wearing the already outdated orange and silver livery of the ginger line, is a solid brick portal to Brick Lane. It's a cavernous space that boasts plenty of wall footage and at weekends the sort of footfall worth paying for: the mostly young and affluent and over here from god knows where, and with god knows what. But enough (contactless) ready cash to splash to make Ronzo's Crunchy Credit Crunch monster from his carpark eyrie high above the Truman Brewery blush an even brighter shade of puce. Though he's just another one of the attractions: street art in the service of man or mammon, protest or promotion, activism or advert. Free Palestine or Free Superdry Samples, the distinctions are so blurred here it scarcely matters, and the fly-poster is a creature who straddles all these worlds.

Like the trains around here, the underground has long since gone overground, and territory once claimed by stealth and trial and error, is largely part of the establishment. Or an established pattern of pay to display poster sites and boards for hire operated by the likes of UNCLE in key locations. The situation is far from static though. With wildcat flyers and artists for whom street decoration is a calling or a cause, evidently tolerated in quid pro quo, grace and favour deals. Such loss leaders, if eating into potentially valuable commercial canvases, are often celebrated for adding to the gaiety of the whole. Keeping things visually interesting is in everyone's interest, ultimately and the interplay between the semi-official, the illegal and the merely opportunistic are all part of the scenery around here. Though not without their tensions.

A salt and pepper bearded veteran in the field, and my guide for an August afternoon drift around the terrain, recalled the chaos caused by a French crew flyering for an act of their compatriots booked to play at the Rich Mix on Bethnal Green Road. Their intemperate postering around the venue over just a few weeks came close to upsetting an equilibrium hard fought for over decades. By contrast he pointed to a newly painted mural commemorating the only recently deceased bat-biter and Black Sabbath singer Ozzy Osbourne. This seemingly spontaneous tribute had colonised a large section of wall just beyond the archway but out of respect for the artistry of the work and its sentiments ('RIP Ozzy') was being left entirely untouched by everyone for the time being. Fly-posters are people too, and with record collections that rock and not always so gently. As for 'Paranoid', you be mad not to be in this line, the police and public constantly on your back, even these days it seems.

I was reminded, postering had predominantly been bankrolled by the largesse of the music biz and record companies, both seemingly awash with cash from young consumers with fewer buying options. Takeaway coffee then, an instant Nescafe in a polystyrene cup. Queues outside bakeries a sign of shortages not social media posts. In the era of inky weekly music papers, where gigs required paper tickets to master by mail-order or a visit to a box office and in person, and vinyl was the format of no choice, the poster was chapter and verse of the word on the street. The illicit nature of flyering by association, bestowing a further imprimatur of cool on whatever gig, concert tour or record was being promoted. And grassroots the phrase of a choice for campaigns, largely conducted by fly-posting across the forests of corrugated iron that sprouted beside building and bomb site alike.

Such temporary hoardings may have long since been superseded by the blue-walls of property developers, a new form of the old enclosures. And their space, like the ground they surrounded, far more assiduously monetised foot by foot for maxim profit, with no PR opportunity going to waste. Fashion and sportswear brands (Nike, Cloud Surfer Max, Hunter wellies, Clarks shoes), and wellness quackery (Wild Nutrition) supplanting the likes of Virgin or Island Records as the paymaster generals for this age of flyering.

Yet some of the old cat and mouse games continue. The fly-poster, even if on a corporate tab, must tread carefully, and try not to draw too much attention to themselves.

Attacks by random drunks and assaults by organised, self-described, 'anti-vandalism vigilantes' are not uncommon.

Historically blending into the background was the best practise. My fly-posting guide favoured, and continues to favour, anonymous-ish work-wear. Timberland boots and the sort of grey-blue utility jackets with logos on them that suggest a working knowledge of carburettors, or at least petrol pumps. High-vis, though, in bestowing upon its wearers the cloak of invisibility, to this day remains the go-to garment of choice for most fly-posters. Time was of the essence. Everyone has their own preferred hours of operation: late at night and dawns with fewer people about are deemed riskier by some than teeming rush hours and lunch times and vice versa. The need to move fast was implicit from the outset in the profession's fore-name: 'to fly', as in to "go at full speed, move or pass with swiftness or alacrity" dates, according to my dictionary, from at least the 12th century. Which also informs me that 'the flys' was a name given to early Hackney carriages in honour of the rapidity with which they 'flew' through the city's streets, and my veteran companion, when younger, took to postering by motorbike, relishing the speed and mobility it gave him. Vans, he reckoned, are far more usual nowadays.

Passing a narrow bit of corner next to a kebab shop just off Brick Lane and filled-in with posters, he paused to admire the ingenuity of the flyers for 'squeezing a bit of space' out of such a superficially unprepossessing site. The queue, he said, was the thing here. For a steady stream of late-night punters, that corner would be first and last thing they saw before entering and then exiting the shop with their fill of doners and falafels.

Equally enterprising to his mind was a home-made frame board emblazoned with the words 'End the Siege in Gaza'. This had been hand fixed with locking plastic tags to the wire fence of the Solater Street car park. There it sat beside (and its smaller scale aside) all but indistinguishable from the nearby commercial boards. Some of which, in any case, had had their posters partially ripped down, revealing instructions for their application on their rear side. The detailed mechanics of a professional operation and the impish intervention of subversion joined in plain sight, much to my guide's (and indeed my own) delight.

Back on Bethnal Green Road, nevertheless, we found a closed down former caff ('TAKE AWAYS AVAILABLE') emblazoned with notices maintaining that 'Bill Posters Would Be Prosecuted',

clearly successfully since there was nary a poster to be seen. Heads were shaken, at all that decent walling going to waste.

Beyond the reach of the City authorities, Shoreditch was where London's theatres first set up shop, before hotfooting it over the river to Southwark when Puritan opprobrium and fear of pestilence got too much. But the posting of 'play bills' to advertise coming theatrical attractions set the pattern for fly-posting as we know it today. The show, as ever, a pantomime, with its heroes and villains.

Most fascinating in the end, though, was a run of boards we came across, toward the Commercial Tavern, sponsored by Instagram - the Silicon Valley monolith Meta's image-sharing site. The virtual, quite self-consciously and for some perceived financial gain, choosing to plant themselves in tangible, analogue reality (all very 'meta' in the original sense). With real estate, as ever, the ultimate winner in this battle for attention. Real estate and attention, both commodities in short supply, and never more obviously so than here and now.

TRAVIS ELBOROUGH

25TH JULY, 2025
1.00PM - 4.25PM

VENUE

Islington Townhouse
13 Liverpool Road
London N1 0RW

PRESENT

Kevin Thomas
Tim Horrox
Adrian Burnham
Richard Broadbent

Interview
with

KEVIN
THOMAS

BEGINS

TH Well, how long have we been meeting up?

KT 'Kin hell Tim!

TH We've probably done it for...

KT Twenty years.

TH Well, thirty I would've thought.

[...]

We used to meet up every month, didn't we?

KT And I still see Nigel.¹

TH I saw him!

KT Yeah, I know. We spoke the other day...

TH He never changes. It's unbelievable.

KT But he's got blond hair now.

[Laughter]

KT [To RB] Do you know Nigel?

RB Yeah, well vaguely.

KT He's always black hair, now he's got blond hair. And it suits him!

RB He looked like Brian May didn't he?

TH He does look a bit like Brian May.

KT He still looks the same. He still looks like he's a pop star.

TH Yeah.

KT Whatever. He's put a bit of weight on, hasn't he?

TH He has put a little bit of weight on. But not much, I mean I did notice...

KT He's a tall fella. He can carry it.

TH Yeah, he can carry it. I've got some pictures actually...

KT Of Nigel?

[TH shows pic.s on his phone]

TH Yeah, photographs. He's looking very well. And he's so funny.

KT I still don't know what he does. Did he tell ya?

TH Well, he tries to tell you.

KT Summit to do with getting loads of coins from China, Russia, here, there and everywhere. Hundreds of millions of pounds. He's got loads of money. Still don't know what he does. He tells me all the time.

RB Right, right.

KT And I still don't know.

TH It's one of those, kind of, where someone tells you and however many times they tell you, you're still never gonna understand. What I can't understand is how you get the scale? 'Cos I mean...

KT It's tons.

TH Twenty-five thousand pounds worth of coins or...

KT Well, a million quid innit?

TH Exactly, yeah. [...] You don't understand how he'd get it. He buys it half-price.

KT And he cleans it, and he gets full money for it, whatever, so it's good money.

TH And it's all legit...

KT Yeah

¹ Nigel Daley bought out Dave Walker in 1988 and Terry "The Pill" Slater 1991 to become part owner with Kevin Thomas of Slater & Walker, up until the mid-noughties, the biggest fly-posting outfit in the UK.

TH There's no dodginess, well, in theory there's no dodginess about it.

RB Really?

TH Yeah

RB I think he owed Rod 500 quid or something and Nigel left a bag of 5 pence pieces at the doorstep.

[Laughter]

RB There was a sack of 5ps!

TH There he is, yeah, looking very...

KT Yep. That's him, same as ever...

TH With his...

KT Cup of tea! What you doing with a cup of tea?

TH Well, when we're not with YOU!

[Laughter]

Indeed, I mean he drank a lot at Leamington, didn't he?

KT Yeah.

TH When he set the club up in Leamington.

KT That's right yeah

TH Because he never really drank...

KT He used to drink, when we was in the office he used to drink and come in the pub a bit, but, again he was driving, so he'd only have a couple.

TH Well I don't know if he only had a couple, it always felt, for me, when we left...

KT I used to have a lot! But, er..

RB He just looks like an old rock star now dun' he?

[Laughter]

RB He did have that rockstar charm

TH And fabulous stories. So we're going to meet up with Nigel, he can tell a story, can't he, still...

KT He used to give me, when he was getting the coins, he used to get loads of Euros an' all that. I used to get sackfuls, and I used to go to Spain a lot, and the amount of times I got stopped because they couldn't work out what it was [in the case]. Because they was going through the hand luggage and they've looked at that and thought, what's that?!

TH The coins!

[All looking at various photographs and commenting on the enormous amount of bagged coins.]

TH Well, here's even a better one...

KT How did [he] get into it?

TH God knows. Look at this. This is a killer... I don't know what's going on here.

AB That's ridiculous.

TH Coins, yeah!

KT Jesus Christ!

RB Does he still collect his salt and pepper pots?

KT I don't think he does. He used to go mainly to America, he used to have loads didn't he? And if you go to his house it was everywhere...

RB He always used to say "if you get any"...

KT He used to give my brother-in-law, George, he used to give 'im loads to sell on the markets. [...] They used to have a magazine called 'Shakers', that's what it was called, because of salt and pepper shakers, in America. He used to go to, mainly, Vegas, a lot of the time, he used to love it. I think he's stopped all that now

TH I think he was something like the Chairman, or something of the Salt & Pepper Conference. I can't imagine him doing a speech.

RB I think the Chinese loved it!

TH I can't remember, because he used to put them in bread trays, didn't he?

KT Yep.

TH He had thousands of these bread trays.

KT Yeah, he had loads. And then he had that big Volkswagen van and he loaded it up, in the cab not in the back. So, he'd be in with his salt and pepper pots and then, he crashed. Do you remember? They turned it over, it's ridiculous because he's just been hit by all these salt and pepper pots.

AB That's a shake up isn't it!

RB End up sneezing a lot.

KT I think that's gone by the by now.

TH Yeah, I think it all went with him going bust. He would have had to sell all that stuff on. You know when you've lost everything, probably had to sell everything.

KT He lost the lot didn't he. He lost his fuckin' car.

TH He didn't even have a bank account.

KT He didn't have a bank account for years.

TH Ade has been down this route...

AB I've been bankrupt.

TH He's a fellow bankrupt person...

AB I was saving up to go bankrupt, because it cost about £500 to go bankrupt...

KT To go bankrupt?

AB Yeah, and I was feeding my kids their breakfast one morning, and I was distracted, I opened the door and this bailiff got his foot in the door, and he took the £500 I'd saved up to go bankrupt.

TH Oh my God!

AB So, I had to borrow £500 to go bankrupt

KT If you'd gone bankrupt before the bailiffs come, you'd have been OK.

AB Well - I'd have not lost my £500.

[TH laughs]

KT Funnily enough I've got a company chasing me at this moment in time.

RB Yeah?

KT I'm a landlord and I had tenants in the house. They left. Two months later somebody else coming in, in between, the house was empty. And these new tenants came in and, a week after they came in they got a bill from this Utility Warehouse, never heard of them. £500 OK.

RB Yeah.

KT OK, so I phoned them up and said, look! what's the bill for? The people have left, that's when they left, these new people have taken it over, so there's a meter reading, [surely]... that's easy enough?

A month later, you haven't paid this bill for 5 hundred and something quid! Do this within 7 days or we're going to take you to court.

So, I phoned him up AGAIN and said, look! I've told you all the circumstances. [...] I sent a copy of when the people moved in, etc. and I said, by the way, I've never had a contract with you, so don't tell me I owe you money, because I've never ever signed a contract.

Anyway, they sent me another letter and said, if you don't talk to us within 7 days we're going to start proceedings.

So, what I'm going to do, if they don't send me another letter by Monday, I'm going to send them a letter to say, this is harassment. I've been on the phone to you, I've sent you a letter this, that and the other, as far as I'm concerned this is harassment. Any more expenses I incur, I'm now going to take you to court. My wife's scared of you comin' round the house. Blah blah blah, so would you please sort this out now. Or else take me to court or I'll take you to court. So, I've just given him a bit of his own bollocks!

TH Yeah, well this actually leads onto... Kevin's a master of going to court!

RB The famous Mickey Mouse one, wasn't it?

KT Camden, Islington Council.

RB Did you actually take a puppet with you?

KT I might as well 'ave took it, I left it in the van actually. But that was funny, I was 5 days worth in court.

RB 5 days, really, what was the charge?

KT What it was, they tried to do me for...

TH Was it the ASBO?

KT Ah yes, they tried to give me an ASBO. And they said, well blah blah blah, accept an ASBO. That's thirty odd thousand pound, in their costs.

RB That's a lot isn't it?

KT [To TH] Who did you have? You [had] Imran Khan?

TH Well, yeah [Laughs]. We had Peter. We had those 2 guys who then went and set themselves up as, you know [REDACTED] and we had to represent them. But they then grassed us all up and set themselves up [as a bill-posting outfit]. Well, they didn't grass us up, they went off and started their own business, so we got a very good lawyer in to look after that.

KT An' they never, Camden Council never replied to me. So I went to stand up in Court on Monday. And I said, well I've been onto Camden Council, they've never replied to me. So they said, well, we're all here now, do you want to go ahead with it? So, I said OK! So went ahead. It was the funniest fucking court case ever! It was hilarious. You wanna see 'im. The guy said to me, one of the prosecutors said, I don't actually understand how it works, it's an illegal business, you're going out doing it whatever. And I said, I'm going out Sunday Morning, do you want to come out with me?

[Laughter]

But we went through it, and they come up with loads of different things. They had people coming up on crutches to give evidence, in their agony, all this. They had a letter

from a manager of the band, said that they'd given me the posters. [They said] we phoned you up, September 2nd, to say, would you do Camden for us? And your secretary said, yes, no problem at all. Yet you're telling me you stopped 9 months before. They said, but we phoned up, in September and you happily go along with it, no problem at all, we can do Camden.

And I said, but you're in business, no you're not in business, you're a lawyer! So, in business, you never turn business away. So, I said, of course I'll take the work. I wouldn't do it. And then when they ask me why I hadn't done, I'll tell 'em why, but I wouldn't never dream of doin' it.

RB No.

KT He said, well these posters turned up in Camden that you had. And I said of course they was given to me. But, again, see you don't understand fly-posting. They don't give me all the posters, they give you some, and they keep some. Now I couldn't put them up there, but he was going to put them up himself. And [the prosecutor] he's blaming me and I says, it's not me doing it. [...] Well you've had 9 months of having, like, a secret service agent, this, that the other. An' all these different people on the phones. Where's the manager of the group [that accused Kevin]? Why isn't he here for me to ask him a question?

So, I said, you've got a bit of paper there. I said, I'm sorry that bit of paper doesn't mean anything to me. I said, it's a statement from a manager without me being able to question it. I said, you're putting that down there as evidence against me. And you're questioning my truthfulness about what I do because I'm a fly-poster, I'm a bit iffy. I'm sure I could bring 10 people down to verify what I'm like but giving me a bit of paper doesn't give me a chance to discuss it and prove innocence.

[...]

Anyway, so we went through days of this. They were going through fucking hoops, these people. And come to the end the judge said, right, I think you probably are guilty, but I'm sorry the proof is not there, so I'm going to say you're not guilty. So I said, thank you, can I claim for costs? And he said, you can, but you can't claim for missing work because you're doing an illegal job!

[Laughter]

I said, OK, now Camden Council, wanted, before this court case, they wanted about 30 or 40 grand off me. With the lawyers and all that, so 50 or 60 grand. [They asked] what are your costs? I said, well, train down here 'an my lunch, come to 95 pound.

The head barrister got up and said, I'm sorry you would have been eating anyway, so why would we have to pay for it? So, after all that they offered my 75 quid. And they never paid me...

[Laughter]

AB You'd have been eating anyway! It's ridiculous.

KT It was so funny. They were hilarious.

RB You should have been a lawyer.

TH We went first, didn't we? And we lost, obviously. And then Kevin came in and won, you had 'em all.

KT But, honestly, a lot of it. Well, you're just thinking on your feet sometimes.

TH Well, you've done loads of those haven't you. How many times have you been in court?

KT The other one they did me. They had CCTV footage, all of it there. The whole lot's on screen. They had all the pictures and sent me a big folder.

RB You were actually posting then?

KT Not me, but somebody for Slater Walker. They had this van there, they had the times, the lot. Everything. So, I turned up in court and they said, oh we're going to get the DVD player to show the judge. I said, don't worry about that, I'll accept [your] evidence, I don't need [to see the CCTV footage]. And they said, oh right, we'll tell the judge you've accepted the evidence. I went, OK fine. But, he said, you're pleading Not Guilty? I said, that's right, I accept all your evidence. Why? I'll tell you in court, I'm not going to tell you out here.

[Laughter]

So, we go into court and they go blah blah blah, I say we do fly-posting, we work for CocaCola, we work for these people, this, that and the other.

OK, so look there's your man, the picture he's got in this photo album, the van, the number plates. Trouble with you lot, you rely too much on CCTV, I said why don't you get the police to nick him? Nick him! He's illegally fly-posting, nick the man. You know these posters he's putting up? I said, they're not mine. He said, what?! I'd give him the van, make sure it's insured, taxed and everything else so he can go and put my posters up. These are his own posters, they're not my posters.

RB Were they really?

KT Of course they were.

[Laughter]

To be guilty you have to get some money, you have to earn money out of the thing, so I said, course they weren't.

I take him on a self-employed basis. I give him the van and his tax and insurance so he can go to work legally, they're not my posters. So, if you've gone to the police and nicked him that would have been fine, I'd say, he's now been sacked. He's gone, we don't have 'im anymore. So, look I'm not working for CocaCola and big film companies, all that and putting up a 2 bob job am I? So that's what it is, you look at them and think, fuck! Honestly, it's so funny. You stand there and talk the biggest load of...

TH So, this is all about fly-posting. I mean, Kevin, how did you get into fly-posting?

KT Probably through drinking.

TH Ah, that's a cue! Who's going to...

RB I'll go.

AB I'll go.

RB Adrian, your legs!

AB No, I'm alright. I broke my knee in February.

KT Ah what? Not fly-posting!?

RB He's a bit dodderly.

TH We've got a tab.

KT Can I have steak and chips?

[Laughter]

RB Yeah, I got done 367 times in Nottingham, finally they took me to court, but [REDACTED] got me off.

TH Yeah.

KT Every time?

RB Well, I didn't go every time. After 360 odd times, eventually they banned me from working in Nottingham, again, in my life.

KT Ever?

RB They said you can't work here again, ever. And I said, well I didn't really work here anyway.

[Laughter]

RB And I came down to London the next day, didn't I?

KT You started working for Tim?

TH He was working for me then, yeah, we were trying to get Nottingham.

RB I used to see Nigel a few times yeah.

KT I mean Nigel's great, Nigel came down, he's been in fly-posting since 1990ish, he's never put a poster up in his life. He might have put one or two up...

RB You carried on? You carried on posting didn't you?

KT I was working up 'til we sold up. I mean, I loved it. I mean I used to go out on the weekends and go to the office on the weekdays. But Nigel used to come in, sit down, put his feet up on the desk, didn't 'e? Sit there, loved it, we'd go and have lunch, go down the pub, Anne used to be in the office, she'd go out, do whatever, she'd come back, then we'd go down the pub, ah yeah, he never put a poster up in his life.

RB No!

TH Well, he got into business to get the posters.

KT Through Walker. Dave sold him posters, Dave was doing posters and whatever, Nigel got into it and then Dave sold him part of the business.

RB Yeah.

TH Well, we've interviewed Dave as well, yeah, we did a big bit with Dave down at the hotel, didn't we? And we've done quite a few people now, Johnny Murphy, Lol...

KT Lol?

RB He asked about you, actually. I spoke to him the other day, he rings me up every other day now, he's a bit lonely, he hasn't been very well. He loves talking about posters.

KT I got on great with Lol. He was lovely, I sacked him.

RB You sacked him loads of times.

KT Oh yeah, I sacked him a few times. He used to come over for half a dozen beers, sit down, have a chat and we'd do whatever. He was a good fly-poster. But unfortunately he was fuckin' lazy. I said to him, you know I think we're going away for a week in the sun. He said, everything's fine, you know. I I came back, it was shit. You know, the way I sack people is dead simple, on a Friday I'd say, give me the keys to the van.

[Laughter]

Dead easy.

RB So, he'd have to get the bus home?

KT Absolutely. Give me the keys to the van and I'll be seeing you, goodbye. 'Cos there's no warning in those days. 'Cos they're all self employed. And Lol was a good friend of mine.

RB Ah, must be hard to do.

TH He came back a few times...

KT He came back, after the last one, we finished, I still see 'im an' all that. I used to love Lol.

We were with the Pill, Terry the Pill, one night, he picked up Eric Burdon from Luton Airport, You know The Animals?²

RB Yeah.

² Eric Burdon was the lead singer in The Animals and English group formed 1963 in Newcastle and celebrated for their distinctive blend of rock, rhythm and blues sound.

KT He's come back to the Cricklewood Hotel, that's near where we used to be in Cricklewood. We're sitting there, Burdon and all that, havin' a drink. And we were having a chat and Lol was there. And Lol went to the toilet and Burdon said, I must have been backin' him in some place...

[Laughter]

Because Lol was going on about all the bands he'd done this, that and the other. Must have been backin' him somewhere! Fuckin' hell. We were talkin', this was October/November time, about havin' a do at Christmas and he said, I wouldn't mind playing that. No problem. In the Cricklewood Hotel, we had a big room upstairs.

RB Was that The Animals? Or just him?

KT Yeah, just 'im. Gotta big room upstairs, all going up there, all havin' a drink an' whatever, load of cu.. I give everybody a menu, curry, fuckin' 50, 60, people, 70 people. Said, there you go, have a look, pick what you want. Fuckin' 'ell they all come back with fuckin' orders. So, I've got 2 big pots. One chicken curry. One something else. So, whatever you ordered, it didn't matter. [Plus] a load of bubbly.

But he said, I wouldn't mind doing that [for] as much as you can drink and what you can eat. Alright, I'll do it.

So, he came in, Cricklewood Hotel, fuckin' December or whatever it was. He was up on the stage fuckin' rockin' an' rollin'. And I had 2 strippers waitin' to go on. And the geezers come and said, if they don't come on soon, we've gotta go. So, I said, sorry lads do you want to keep Eric on or do you want the strippers on? They said, let's 'ave the strippers.

[Laughter]

We pulled Eric Burdon off the stage, in the Cricklewood Hotel, that 'e was doin' for nothing!

RB What did he think about it?

KT 'E loved it. He come back on stage afterwards and carried on. 'E loved it.

RB He had an incredible voice, he was voted the greatest voice in Blues.

KT I was never bothered about people, to be honest. We was havin'

a beer, that's all. And I realise now how famous he was. When you look at him now and who he played with. The bands he had, the songs he did.

RB They were number 1 in America for ages with that song.

KT Dave 'ad that band over from Australia, he 'ad them over here for fuckin' ages. Guy called, I dunno, David somebody. And 'e was trying to promote them and 'e had 'em over for fuckin' ages and they were gonna do The Forum.

'E was doin' one on Charing Cross Road, that was then, they done that, and then they did The Forum, with Eric Burdon. Eric Burdon was doin' it and so was this kid.

TH Town And Country that would have been.

KT He did a thing in Charing Cross Road. Dave Walker set it all up for this kid to do 'is night out. Lol was there obviously. Dave said, all the beers are for nothing, but the spirits you gotta pay for. Sally turns up, that's Dave's wife. Lol said, sorry Sal, all the beers are free, but the spirits you need to pay for. Sal said, what!? Where's Dave? 'E 'ad a fuckin' night of it! Hilarious.

TH Wasn't it something daft, like it was his babysitter's brother or something?

KT Somefin' like that, they sent a tape over and 'e liked it an' 'e brought them over. 'E had 'em over for 6 months, then they went back, the group, but 'e kept the singer over. 'E never got anythin' out of it.

RB I found it quite funny you used to go on holidays together. It was like team building.

KT Ah we did, we used to go on a bill-posters' holiday. That was Dave Walker's downfall. End of story. Finished. We went all over the place, fuckin' everywhere.

AB Why was it Dave's downfall?

KT I dunno if 'e's told you it?

TH Yeah, he's quite descriptive of his downfall, isn't he. He has given us [the lowdown].

KT Met 'em at whatisname, Soraya?

AB Oh right, the whatshername, Amsterdam 'takeaway'!

KT Second time we went to Amsterdam, went there 1 year, or 2 years later. And...

AB She sounds like a fantastic character.

KT Ah, fuckin' 'ell, she was, yeah. We was in West Hampstead. We used to be down there where the office was. We was in the squash club. 'E said I've got a surprise for you. I went upstairs and there was this Soraya sitting upstairs. Ah, fuckin' ell' Dave! Brought 'er over. She was 21 and I said, never! An' 'e kept her over, set her up in Maida Vale somewhere, didn' e'? An' she 'ad a kid.

RB It could have been love.

KT Ah, fuckin' 'ell. I dunno.

RB So, besides drinking, how did you get into [fly-posting]? Where were you born?

KT Camden. Me and Dave used to work in a garage that was, Slater & Walker, Salvage & West, same initials, and 'e came and worked in there. And we got on well in there and then he left, he got into the, there was a guy called Ben Howard, started us into it.

AB He was doing stuff for Vincent and Terry wasn't he?

KT Vincent and Terry was there but Ben Howard was working for Vincent.³

RB Was that Vincent Stitt?

KT Vincent Stitt. Ben was an actor and he used to work for Vincent Stitt and he used to come into the garage, work in the garage when Dave was there, I think Dave got the sack for whatever, and Ben said, could you do a couple of days here, so I started doin' it.

Ben Howard got the chance to do something like a Dickson Of Dock Green thing on TV, anyway he went and dun this, it never worked out but he packed in the fly-posting. So, Dave carried on.

So, then I had [unclear] at the garage and I left. I'd just got a job as a dustman, I was 25, didn' start it.

Dave said, do you wanna do a bit of work for him? And my wife said, well you've been a dustman once. 'Cos I was a dustman when I was 18, 19. Why dun you go an' do something else? So, I plumped for that. I'll tell you when that was. My daughter was... 1976.

AB Yes, cos '76 was the last year of Dickson of Dock Green that Ben was in. That's the way I've been trying to work out dates of things.

TH Oh wow!

RB Was that the first time you put posters up?

KT I suppose yeah, I was doin' it with Dave, and he always said I was SO close to sacking [Kevin]. Then suddenly you started putting them up properly!

[Laughter]

RB He was quite meticulous about his fly-posting, wasn't he?

KT Yeah, it was good fun. We had fuckin' old vans, the old telephone vans, the old Commers, little Morris 1000s in them days. They was all held together by a string. We went out, nobody had an area, you know nobody had anything, it was all over the fuckin' place, anywhere, all of London basically.

AB That's what Tim was saying, we've been looking at a map, and Tim said Kevin and Dave, they just had all this bit of North London, right across the map.

KT Nobody had anything, when I started, you would have done bits and nobody did a proper bit, we just went out and done bits.

RB When did you start doing rounds and areas?

KT We started doing bits, then I started going a little bit further out and there were people in clubs doing their work with clubs.

So, I was taking all the clubs out. If you wanna poster, I'm a proper bill-poster, if you wanna put them up, put them up, if I put them up they'll stay up, if you put them up don't worry. Do whatever but I'm just telling you, I'm a fly-

3 Vincent Stitt was an emcee, old time town hall dance promoter who instigated fly-posting.

poster, then I finally got all the club work, then we started moving on with little bits, then we started making an area, that's what we did.

TH It became a big area, didn't it?

KT Oh, yeah, gradually we moved on and moved on. When we started, there was me and Dave working. I'm just trying to think...yeah, me and Dave. And then we got Peter in, then it started going on, I got my brother-in-law in, I got somebody else in, ended up about 8 of them, I kept going out further, pissing loads of people off, if you keep on doing it they come to you, I mean, we had all the Indians, the Indians were going fucking mad.

RB What were they advertising then?

KT They were doing their own posters, and we were taking them out, you know, all Southall, this that and the other. It's as bad as everywhere now but we used to go fuckin' mad. We were doing it all the time. If you wanna do them as a one off, do a one off, but I'm doing it 7 days a week!

RB So, you were actually working 7 days a week then?

KT In them days I was always working weekends. In them days I probably was doing...

RB Was that for 10 hours or something?

KT Ah, no we'd start early in the morning. Best bit, start early, come lunchtime you're done, go in the pub, that was it.

RB Did the police give you any hassle in those days, were they always chasing you around?

KT Yeah.

[Pause for drinks]

TH So, it kind of, from '76 it became big business didn't it?

KT It did, with Dave, me and Dave worked, done whatever, gradually worked and worked and worked and we took other people in. And then Dave took a back seat with working, he was still talking to the record companies, etc., etc. But I'm out there doing it. And I said, I need somebody else in. So, we ended up [getting] somebody else in, somebody else in. And we carried on building it up and we went out so far but, let's face it, North London was the jewel in the crown, like the West End,

Chelsea, all the record companies were there and everyone saw the work I've done for others. It was the jewel in the crown.

RB So, they were your main clients then?

KT Ah yeah, absolutely, we ended up getting loads of them, they used to give us, like anybody, if you had your [poster] on the wall all over the place, and you were the fuckin' Island Records, EMI would say, how come so and so has got his [posters] up? We want ours up. How many they got? Ah fuck 2000, give us 3000.

RB So, the numbers just went up and up?

KT Yeah, and it was great.

TH At that point you were bill posting for Terry and Dave? They ran it?

KT They were running the office, but I'll never forget, Terry and Dave, they just sold out to Nigel, sold some of the shares to Nigel

RB What date was that?

KT About 1989, 88.

KT 'E said to me, I just made your shares worth a load more money. I said, what do you mean? I've sold out and your shares are worth 100 grand, 150 grand.

RB Who said that?

KT Dave. I said OK, He said Nigel's coming.

RB Did you know Nigel then?

KT I did know him, vaguely from [him] buying posters [off Terry and Dave].

RB He used to buy posters, yeah

KT Only just [buying posters originally]. So, I said to 'im, you're a fuckin' mug, Dave, you're mad, you're selling part of the goose laying the golden egg. I said, Dave, this is what I said, you ain't good enough [at promoting bands]. '88, said you ain't good enough. He was chasing money, sold out to Nigel, him and Terry, whatever went they had to have half same amount obviously, they had credit cards in the company,

them two had credit cards, so if Dave spent 1000 pound, Terry would have to spend 1000 pound.

RB To catch up.

KT They had, fuckin' ell. Every fuckin' week, Dave Walker and Terry, had flowers delivered to their house, always had flowers delivered to their house.

RB Sounds very romantic.

KT One time, one time. Somethin' went tits up with Dave, about somethin'. So, they came to me. I took them home to my ol' woman, she couldn't [believe it]. What the fuck!? For 3 weeks I took her flowers home. Because he wasn't taking them home, she was gone. So, I took most of them.

When Nigel came in it was the best thing that happened for me and for fly-posting. Me and Nigel got along great before he came in. When he came in, we started talking a lot more. When he came in, I cut all the credit cards up, cos the company was skint. I had to go to the bank and put the house on the market to keep an overdraft. That's how bad Terry and Dave left us, they left us so badly down, they'll probably never tell you this, so we cut everything up, chucked everything away, we didn't take one penny, and we started working. End of the year the accountant said, you've made so much money, how do you want to do it, we can put it into this, or that? Give me the cash, we'll take the money and we'll leave a couple of grand in the company and start again next year. But they left us skint.

RB What was Terry like, he sounds like an interesting character

KT You 'ad Terry and Vince.

RB Was Vince a bit older?

KT Vince was like the loose cannon and Terry was the businessman in them days. And we used to go to work and we'd meet up in the Swiss Cottage Pub and you'd finish on a Friday and Vincent would pay you and Terry would pay you. And you'd walk out and check what they'd pay you. Because they'd both pay you different wages.

RB But you couldn't look straight away?

KT Vince was fuckin' mad, he was fuckin' hilarious, knew everybody, knew loads of people.

AB He was like a post-war promoter?

KT He had a house in West Hampsted which was worth a fuckin' fortune. An' he knew so many people.

AB Was that from putting stuff on?

KT He used to put stuff on and do whatever, but he started doing the fly-posting, an' he used to do all the boxing, the wrestling, all that. He'd go into EMI records, sitting there, in a Rupert The Bear jacket and you were like the fuckin' CEO of EMI records sitting in the office and e'd come in for his money. You'd 'ave to go and get 'is cash.

RB Was he quite intimidating then?

KT Nah, nah. He was a lovely fella, he certainly wasn't intimidating

TH How did Terry and the Stitt get together?

KT I don't know. I met them when they were both together. So, I dunno.

TH You were asking about Terry?

RB I was. I said Terry was quite an interesting fellow too, wasn't he?

KT Terry, 'e's got the name Terry "The Pill" 'cos apparently, supposedly, supposedly, there was a police raid on some group and he jumped out with a load of pills and he got away and saved them getting done. He was supposed to be the manager of Amen Corner.⁴

But, you know, I was in Wembley one time, with a mate of mine, and standing at the bar, and waiting to see Rod Stewart. And standing at the bar and Rod walked by and said, hello Pill how are you doin? And he carried on walkin' on and got on stage!

RB But did he do some stuff with Rod Stewart, with some sort of Scottish Singer?

KT That's how they got into fly-posting because they were in the business. And they started doing bits, only little bits. Vince and Terry, to be honest with you, they were the start

⁴ Amen Corner were a 1960s Welsh group best known for their hits 'Bend Me, Shape Me' (1968), 'High in the Sky' (1968) and '(If Paradise Is) Half as Nice' which reached no.1 in the UK charts in February 1969.

of it, but they were just doing bits, bits and pieces and me and Dave got in and made it a bit better. But them two they were like, was when it was raw. For Rod Stewart to walk across the fuckin' big thing and walk over to Terry and say, hello Pill 'ow you doin'? I mean 'e did know some people, Terry.

AB But you were there at the right times as well, because you established a larger control over a bigger area and the music industry then, it was just the right time for them to advertise in that way?

KT Oh, it was. I mean we were doing it, you know, I extended it, made it into whatever, and took on the people to work for me, to keep it going, and half the people left and went to him [gesturing at TH]. Kept 'im goin!

[Laughter]

RB Do you think by carrying on fly-posting yourself that's how you really controlled it all? Sounds to me like you did, didn't you? If you just sat in the office it wouldn't work, would it?

KT I mean, at one time, I said about Dave and Terry used to always get flowers every week, we called him Daff Daff. Geoff, his name was, he was doin' all the flowers. He came to work with us. So, he was working for us doin' this, that and the other.

TH Was he related to the Blairs?

KT Oh, that was Sid.

TH Oh, that was Sid. Oh right, you'll have to do that one after.

KT This Geoff, right, 'e's there, I said to all the guys, make sure all the fuckin' work's done, by Friday I want everything lookin' good. No matter what it is, it's gotta look good.

Anyway, Friday morning, driven into the office and I see this van parked round the corner. I felt the engine, is this Geoff's van? And we used to have a roof carpark, so I got into the office, got the spare keys out, got the van started, put it on the roof.

So come lunchtime, they all came in to get paid, have a drink. Geoff walked in, hello, Geoff, wanna beer mate?... What's up? Well I fuckin' know what's up!

[Laughter]

Well, fuckin' 'ell, the van's gone! What do you mean, the van's gone? I left it earlier, I had to go home and do somethin', and it's gone.

What do you mean you left earlier, so have you done the Uxbridge Road and all the fuckin' bits an' pieces an' all that down there? Well no, I was gonna do that, but the van's gone.

Geoff, the van's on the fuckin' roof. Go an' get it, you go an' do the Uxbridge Road. I'll fuckin' pay you next week! You go 'an do the Uxbridge Road an' so an' so. Urrghh!

[Laughter]

TH Two weeks later I sacked him.

KT You had another fun story didn't you? That young guy, Matthew! That's a good one as well.

Matthew. He was a lovely kid. 'E used to be an unlicenced boxer. Bit of a lunatic, 'e was into drugs and 'e went missing, I could see the van down the 'arrow Road, parked up on the pavement. I said to Billy Powell, Bill, come and get the van. So I gone down there. There was all these people outside the fuckin' 'ouses they were all looking at it. All black 'an all that. They said, that's 'Black Paul''s van. Oh yeah?! I said, tell 'Black Paul' the fuckin' owner's just come an' picked it up. [Matthew]'d given it to this geezer as a drug debt. 'Ed give it to 'im.

[Laughter]

TH That was Matthew wan'it?

KT Yeah, yeah.

RB 'E was a good kid but, fuck me, a loose cannon.

KT So, you'd hired Billy Powell by then?

TH Billy Powell. I didn't hire him. Dave Walker 'ired 'im, against me.

KT He was part of the garage?

'E was part of the garage! 'E tried to 'ave me and Dave over in the garage, lo and behold, he got kicked out the garage

by 'is long, long, long term 'friend' John Salvage. Anyway, I still dunno what he did [to get the sack from the garage]. 'E used to turn up, bangin' on our door, an' Dave said about hirin' 'im. I said, Dave, 'e's trouble. 'E was a fuckin' good fly-poster.

AB I know it sounds odd, but I went with Billy on the last 3 days of his bill-posting career.

KT The last 3 days?!

[Laughter]

AB Yeah.

TH How did Billy end? And I sacked him?! [Laughs]

AB Tim and I weren't necessarily talking much at the time, were we. Yeah, his last 3 days.

TH He was working for me?

AB Yes, he was working for you. It was when the Olympics was being built, and his round got totally mucked up by the private security over on that side of Town. Then we went right over to Neasden, to the Temple, so his round, it was ridiculous, yeah I went round with him his last 3 nights.

TH Is that when I got Slater Walker then?

AB It was 2007.

KT Yeah, you sacked 'im.

[Tim Laughs]

You've still got Kenny working with you?

TH Yeah, I've got Kenny...

KT Damon?

TH Oh Damon, yeah.

RB So how did you let Tim in then?

KT Well, me and Nigel was 2005, 2006 something like that and it was all getting hard work with the Council and stuff and fuck 'em. And Tim wanted to buy 'em

RB Because he was doing the small posters?

KT 'E was doin' 'em, 'e was also doing a bigger poster on other sites an' all that. We 'ad a deal goin' for whichever, it was a real convoluted fuckin' thing. And I was into other things anyway. And, Tim came along, made an offer, a derisory offer, I should've doubled it.

[Laughter]

It shows dun it, when he can walk around in fuckin', when I can't afford a pair of trousers.⁵ It shows 'e's done well out the job dun it?

RB So, the employees you had then, did they go over to Tim?

KT Whoever Tim wanted, 'e chose whoever, mind you, most of the ones I 'ad he took anyway. I sacked some, some left went to 'im. Mark went to you, Terry went to you. Lol tried to take you out.

AB Who was the Terry who did Soho?

KT Terry Jones.

AB Terry Jones, I used to go out with him quite a lot, his missus used to put a little flannel in a Tupperware container. So, he could wipe hands in between pasting.

TH That's Kevin's sister!

KT Yeah

TH Be careful! [Laughs]

KT We used to have a battle with a guy called Keith Harvey.

RB Ballerina?

KT Keith 'Arvey used to put bits of wood on the wall and put 'is posters up to make 'is posters look OK. I used to go and take 'em all fuckin' down and chuck 'em. I'd say to Terry, I've taken 'em down. Fuck 'em. Didn't even think about it. That's what you do. By Saturday, my sister phoned me. Is Terry with you? I said, no, is he at work? Ah 'ang on, it's OK 'es 'ere.

'E was working in the West End, seen some posters put up by Keith 'Arvey, took the wood down, the Old Bill stopped 'im, dun 'im for theft, for taking the wood off the wall, took 'im 'ome and 'e used to live in Loughton in Essex, so from the West End they took 'im to Loughton in Essex and they wouldn't phone up and tell 'is wife, obviously. They went to my sister, they're goin' to a weddin that afternoon, with Terry, she basically said, where the fuck 'ave you been? The Old Bill walked in, oh 'es been nicked.

She went, you're searchin' my fuckin' house. You fuckin' bunch of... They said, alright, we've gotta take 'im back. They didn't even search, they walked in, walked out and had to take 'im all the way back to the West End to release 'im. She went fuckin' mad.

RB Yeah, sounds it.

KT 'Cos 'e took bits of wood off the wall.

TH Keith was a persistent, it went on for a long time!

KT Ah, 'e never stops.

TH You had a great story of watching out for him. Remember you went to a pub in the West End and you waited.

KT I phoned 'im up, asked 'im to come an' meet me. 'E was an OK kid, 'e was fuckin' Jesus Christ he was a Ballet Dancer?

TH He was a Ballet Dancer, yes.

KT He was persistent, fuck me. He went [...]

TH Yeah, yeah, went on for a long time.

KT He went to [...] then he started suddenly giving us the work.

TH I thought we did a deal, Peter knew him obviously, then we tried to do a deal with him. I mean, Peter actually saw him about 6 or 7 months ago, driving past him, so at least we know he's alive.

KT 'E was alright, Keith I mean..

TH Didn't you chase him into a bank or something?

KT I chased 'im down the road a couple of times. I never got 'im. No, 'e was OK' Keith. Afterwards we met 'im 'an all tha' 'e, you know, it was good fun.

TH It went on for easily 10 years.

KT Ah, fuckin' 'ell.

TH Before that all died down. Crazy, crazy... It used to go on forever.

KT I mean your biggest problem were the London Calling, wasn't it?

TH Impact.⁶ Yeah, so Impact did all the [roadside telecom.s] boxes.

KT Ah yeah Impact, that was the other one, was it Simon?

TH Simon at Impact yeah.

AB Simon Stamford?

TH No. Dunno what his last name was, but he ran Impact because they tried to take over, they were there before me, they did all the Traffic Light Boxes.

KT Mark came 'an 'elped you no end.

TH They kind of decided they were going to get rid of us. But you sacked Mark and then Mark started working for me.

KT Mark...

TH The Missile! Yes, he was good, Mark. But very awkward wasn't he?

KT You couldn't talk to this kid.

RB I worked with him.

KT You worked with 'im, ah fuck you'd know then. You couldn't talk to him.

RB He was probably autistic, though wasn't he, in those days you didn't think about it.

KT I could say to 'im right, Hackney Road, I want you to put posters there, cos they're coming along at 9 o'clock in the morning. He'd go, I do the North Circular on Saturday Morning.

RB Yeah, exactly, that's what I'm saying.

KT Nah, nah, nah, nah do fuckin' Hackney Road. No, I always do the North Circular.

RB That's what I mean.

KT For fuck's sake, I'm telling yer!

RB He had to have a routine.

KT Oh yeah. 'E come to you then. You lot couldn't talk to him could you?

TH Well, we used to work [together] every Saturday' from 4 o'clock through to around 12/1. It used to be one big argument from, an endless argument, we were exhausted by the time we finished, well I was.

KT 'E was murder. I couldn't tell 'im what to do. An' I dunno 'ow long 'e was working with me, 'e was working with me for a while and I said, I can't do this. 'E said, I'm the best bill poster you've ever 'ad. An' I said, I know you are, but I can't fuckin' talk to you. And I said, give me the keys to the van and fuck off. 'E went to 'im. 'E was murder. Then 'e went to you, an' I don't know 'ow you lot got on with 'im.

TH Well, 'e was good for us.

KT 'E was one of the people that would do it all the time.

RB Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KT If you work with 'im you'd know.

TH He wouldn't let anyone else touch...

RB He went on holiday once for a week and I had to do his round and he was so finickity about every little thing I thought, after a day, I think I'll just leave it, and when he comes back it'll be the same. And it was. He was really pleased.

[Laughter]

TH Yeah, very clever!

RB I said, I'm just about to do these. He was really pleased with me. Because he was like a foreman wasn't he?

TH He was a foreman, he was the first person, really, who worked

for me. We had Dave Cooper. Demo Dave. I was telling everyone about the van, that was incredible wasn't it.

KT I loaned 'im a van, he gave me the steering wheel back! OK Tim, where's the van? 'Es a competitor, I give 'im a van! That's 'ow much of a competitor 'e is. I give 'im a van, 'e give me [back] a steerin' wheel.

RB I never quite understood, you had record companies who said, we want this, we want that. Who actually went to see the record companies?

KT In the days of old Terry an' Dave. Mainly Terry. They were there talkin' to 'em doin' whatever. But, yeah, mainly 'em two. In the early days Vincent...

RB What about Nigel?

KT Nigel, yeah.

RB What about Simon Stamford?

KT No, not Simon, 'e was never involved, just Nigel. But Nigel never really went to see 'em. 'E knew a lot of people, but I'll be honest with you, Terry an' Dave went to see 'em, do whatever. To be honest the fly-posting actually spoke for itself. They saw it on walls. They loved it. They loved seeing posters in the back 'a Soho, round Camden Lock, round here, round there. They would actually chase you.

TH Well Anne was great, wasn't she?

KT She was really good in the office, yes.

TH Anne in the office. Fantastic wasn't she. They came to Anne and she booked them in.

KT All the time, yeah.

RB John Murphy was always going on about people stealing his work and going into record companies.

KT Well John didn't have much in the area. He had bits and pieces. He had a lot of boxing.

RB Oh did he, right? He just had different clients...

KT What's 'e doin' now, John?

TH Well, you've been speaking to him, more than anybody [to RB].

RB Yeah, he came to my flat last week. Yeah, he's retired nicely on the coast, he's really happy.

KT Where's 'e live?

RB I don't know the town. I think it's between, like, Eastbourne and...

KT Bournemouth.

RB Somewhere like that. He invited me down.

KT 'Cos 'e 'ad a place in Spain

RB Everybody's had a place in Spain. Including me.

KT You as well?

RB I was there 20 years.

KT You lived there?

RB Yeah.

KT Fuckin' ell. Whereabouts?

RB Barcelona. Well, Sitges.

KT 20 years?

RB Yeah, well...

AB Your daughter's still there isn't she?

RB My wife died after about 15 years.

KT Ah.

RB So, I kept coming and going.

KT I 'ad my place over there. But I couldn't settle over there.

RB Yeah, I did actually. I settled really well. I carried on doing the posters.

KT Well fab! In Spain?

RB Yeah, we used to do Madrid, Barcelona, Cadiz, Torres...

KT What for Tim?

RB Yeah, and then eventually that dried up a wee bit so we started doing Ibiza. So I did Ibiza, for 6 or 7 years, something like that.

KT What was it like over there, was there any competition.

RB In Spain? It wasn't too bad actually. They were all very nice to you [Laughs], you know what I mean?

KT No competition?

RB Not really. They just put their posters up legally, kind of thing, and we just did it illegally and nobody seemed to be really bothered, except in Ibiza when the police decided to set us up.

KT Fuckin' 'ell.

RB Put us in jail.

AB You ran over the Mayor's wife.

RB Yeah, well I could speak Spanish by then. So, the charge sheet, it said 'attempting to murder a policeman with a screwdriver.' 'Cos that's all I had in the van. And 'running over the mayor's wife.' The mayor of Ibiza. [...] I couldn't leave the country for 2 years, which I didn't mind.

KT Running over the Mayor's wife? What happened? What was that about?

RB Well, it was ridiculous, they were just so stupid, the coppers. Strangely enough, we were working for Pete Tong (so it all went a bit 'Pete Tong'). And Pete Tong, very nicely, came over to see the mayor, because they knew each other, and [reminded the mayor his wife was] in fucking Majorca at the time and also she hadn't fucking been run over. As far as I know! So, in the court case, the judge, he was just embarrassed, because they were supposed to be incorruptible. They just were so angry. So, after 2 years they just told me to go. I asked for costs then, and they said no.

[Laughter]

KT 2 years!

RB I didn't care. I couldn't come back anyway. Tim paid for 2 years while I lazed on the beach, or pissed about, whatever.

KT Fuckin' 'ell.

RB Yeah.

KT I really loved Spain, actually, I really enjoyed it. I could never settle, that's why I sold it after 25 years an' that.

RB Well, it's lovely to live in two places, when you've got the cash. Yes, my daughter's still there, and my granddaughter.

KT Daughter's over there?

RB Yeah, we've still got the same house. We kept the house. Amazingly, I don't know how we kept it, but we managed to keep it. She's proper Catalan.

KT The thing is she probably speaks the language like, when you have kids over there, grand-kids, they all just, they speak it like the Spanish.

[Small talk about kids learning the lingo.]

KT I do like it over there.

RB I was there last week. I did an interview with the guy who does the posting.

AB We're talking to the Spanish fly-posters as well.

RB Same kind of age, really lovely guy, had the most beautiful museum of posters, collecting everything kept every single thing, really nice people. Kind of a fly-posting family, you know what I mean.

AB He said he was going to come over when we do our event.

RB Like everybody else, he's not very well. So many people we've interviewed have not been well. Are you alright?

KT I'm fine!

RB You look well, you look really well

KT Strugglin' on.

RB Did you get bad arms in the end?

KT No, I'm fine.

RB I got arthritis in my arms.

KT Na, I never 'ad no problems. I actually loved it. I loved making new sites up. I loved finding another shop, or another wall or whatever. You know Mills & Allen, yeah, the big hoardin'? I used to go 'an fly-post there. An' one morning, me an' my mate John, I used to work with, we were doin' the back a Nottin Hill, goin' down where we've got this 48 sheet, we were doin' it.⁷ 5 o'clock on a Sunday morning, 5 o'clock on Sunday morning! Just done it then, the Ol' Bill came out an' said, sorry mate you've nicked. I said, no it's my board. I put it up. A geezer from the Council came out an' said, na, you've got no permission to this board. This is 5 o'clock in the morning. Honestly, you've gotta believe this, it's God's Truth. I said, this is my board, I put it up. A guy from Mills & Allen said, Na this is our board. Honestly, they'd been watchin' me, waitin' for me to come an' do this board.

RB Set you up?

KT Bullshit, I'm tellin' you it's my billboard. I put it up. Right, listen, take the posters off. I said, look it's my board, I'm workin' with my mate John, alright John take the posters off. Ol' Bill's taken my name and address, this, that and the other, and now they're goin' to get my mate John. 'Ow long is gonna take you? 15-20 minutes.

Right, so I've got 3 more sites to do round the corner. I go an' do that then I'll come and pick you up. The Ol' Bill, the Council an' the fuckin' guy from [the billboard company]. For fucksade. Sunday morning, they've got nothin' better to do?

I knew it was a Mickey Mouse board. They dun' admit to nickin' me, I never got nothin'. The board went down 3 weeks later because you knew it was a fuckin' dodgy one.

You know I used to put me own boards up. Put loads of boards up, sell 'em, do whatever, get money outta them.

AB We flyed one on the wall round Battersea Power Station. The amount of times we put that up and we'd come back a couple of weeks later and it was gone, then we'd put it up again, a couple of weeks later and it was gone.

KT Yeah, I put loads of stuff up. We put loads of stuff up. I

⁷ A '48 sheet' is the standard size for outdoor advertising hoardings.

put fences up. If you got fuckin' 6 or 8 weeks out of it [it was worth it].

RB So, did you have a big yard then, with wood and all that?

KT Na, we 'ad, when we started we 'ad a little fuckin' garage and we used to 'ave to get water from Vincent Stitt's house an' things like this.

RB Where did Vince live?

KT 'E was just down the road, yeah. To make up the paste.

RB What was the paste like in those days? Was it powder?

KT Na, it was in big fuckin' tubs.

RB Really thick. STADEX!

KT STADEX, that's right 'an you 'ad to mix it all up. I can't remember who said, 'I love the smell of STADEX in the morning.'

AB Probably Dave Hall.

KT We used to make it all up 'an all that.

RB It was tough wasn't it. Tough stuff!

KT But, honestly, when we first started it was fuckin', who knew 'ow long it was gonna go on? I'm doin' a bit of fly-postin' to earn a few quid.

RB Right, right, were you doing a few jobs then?

KT Ah, no, I used to do different bits, but when I got into fly-postin' I stayed on fly-postin' An, when I finished, I used to work in a garage in the afternoon, I used to go 'an work in a garage. But fly-postin's great. Me 'an Dave, in those days used to go to work, finish at 12 o'clock, go on the piss!

RB I think you said, fly-posting's better than working. That's one of your quotes.

[Laughter]

KT Ah yes, yes! It was. I used to love it. When you enjoy something...

RB Do you miss it then?

KT Ah, actually, well I don't miss it now, but I did. I'm in property now, so different thing, you know.

AB It is quite hard work but it's very satisfying opening up rounds. That's what Tim and I used to do.

KT I used to love it. I went into town, into Trafalgar Square one day, pulled down on the fuckin' Trafalgar Square and they'd boarded beside the lions. They'd painted some bits and others they 'adn't.

AB Perfect!

KT There I am, I'm puttin' some posters up an', I'm doin' these fuckin' boards round the lions. Security car came over, fuckin' dog, this, that an' the other. What the fuck you doin'?

RB That is taking the piss a bit.

KT I said, they're doin' a photoshoot down 'ere, we've gotta do this for the photoshoot, they're doin' this, that an' the other. Ah, who's the [client]? Ah, I think it's so and so. He's now holding my posters, while I'm putting the posters up. His fuckin' dog's now sittin' there, I'm pattin' the dog on the 'ead. I'd done all Trafalgar Square. Cheers, I gotta go. And I drove off.

[Laughter]

AB I've got to show you something Kevin, [AB rustling papers]. It's definitely relevant to what we're talking about. You seen this book Rich?

RB It's a beautiful book!

KT Oh fuckin' 'ell.⁸

AB Haha. Great isn't it!

[TH returns from taking a phone call]

TH Alright. Well Nike wants us to put up posters in Barcelona and Madrid. For Monday. [To RB] Want a job? You'll have to go fly-posting in Barcelona on Sunday!

8 AB shows KT a picture of Trafalgar Square fly-posted in 1844 while Nelson's Column was under construction. William Henry Fox Talbot's photograph illustrates p. 55 of Elizabeth E. Guffey's *Posters: A Global History* (2015) pub. by Reaktion Books.

RB Can't you just give it to Mark?

KT Fuckin' 'ell. So what were you doin', sayin' Tim?

TH Well Nike just rang up saying they'd pay money to get posters up in Madrid and Barcelona on Monday.

KT To say what?

TH Well, celebrating the final, I guess.

KT The final's on Sunday in't?

TH Yes, so they want to get posters up on Monday.

KT If Spain wins?

RB It's Spain and England.

KT Where's it being played?

RB Sweden.

TH So, we have to get everything ready.

KT Absolutely, but they're payin' you for that anyway.

TH Yeah, they're paying us, yeah. So, they just want us to come up with a figure.

KT This man is fuckin' famous for goin' International in' 'e?

[TH Laughs]

We've stayed on these shores. 'E's gone international!

RB Yeah, well we used to do Spain a long time ago, we used to fly around with buckets of glue.

TH They just want us to come up with a figure.

KT 'Es done it. 'E moved it on an' moved it on.

RB He's very bright.

[TH laughs]

RB So anyway, you were literally doing North London. So how did, what Tim calls, 'The Regions' work then, Liverpool,

Manchester and that. Were you controlling that as well?

KT No, we stayed where we were.

RB Nigel did.

KT Nigel did, Nigel got involved up there, and Tim got involved up there, but we never did. We used to just stay where we were and, we want somethin' done we'd give it to...

RB Even when you were working with Nigel, when you were partners with Nigel?

TH But that was Trinity Street, wasn't it?

KT Yeah, 'e used to ge' em done an' Tim used to get 'em done an' if we wan' anythin' done outta town I'd give it to whoever, like Vince or...

RB So, did Nigel sell Trinity Street as well?

KT 'E sold Trinity Street to you didn' 'e?

TH Yeah.

RB Right, I was trying to work out when Nigel left Slater & Walker?

KT Nigel didn' sell Slater Walker 'til I did, which was 2006/2007. Na 'e stayed there 'til then. Nigel's good fun I tell ya. Me 'n' him, we took all the crap out the company an', at the end of the year, whatever we earn, we just split. We didn''ave to 'ave credit cards.

RB That's a good idea. You must 'ave really trusted each other.

KT Oh yes, 'e was as good as gold. [...] We just said, at the end of the year, whatever's in just goes down the middle, that's the end of it, dead simple, we never had any credit cards. Dave and Terry used to have cars on the company, all these fuckin' things, ah Jesus Christ! All comin' out the company.

RB They were probably lucky it didn't go really bust, weren't they really? Probably would've done wouldn't it?

KT Ah yeah, it was. And when did Dave go? 88/90 'e sold out. And Terry went in '91. You know, an' we 'ad a great 15 years, a really good time.

RB So, when did Terry pass away then?

KT About 6,7 years ago. He moved out to the Cotswolds or somewhere, yeah he moved out to the Cotswolds.

RB And then, after retirement, you started your Property Business?

KT I'd started beforehand.

RB Yes, so you just concentrated on it then. I bet that's quite tricky sometimes, it's probably complicated in some ways?

KT It runs itself generally, but I do have bits and pieces, nothing to talk about.

RB Better an empty house than a bad lodger, they always say!

[Laughter]

KT Touch wood, I've got good tenants. If they've bin there for a while I don't go silly with the rent.

RB Keep it nice.

[1:20'-1:23'30" KT talks about various landlord & tenant issues, rent, evictions, etc.]

RB So, getting back to family: what did your mum and dad do?

KT Me dad was a stoker, 'e was a miner before the war, in Wales, 'e came down an' 'e started digging the tunnels out, then 'e was in the Royal Engineers in the War. My mum was a cleaner, worked, fuckin' everything, done whatever.

TH Italian?

KT Ah yeah, me Mum was Italian. Dad was a Taffy, should've been a Paddy. 'E was a miner in Wales, got buried a few times, then come down 'ere, started diggin' tunnels. I said, well, fuck me, dad!

RB What was he digging tunnels for here then?

KT For the tubes, 'e cycled all the way down from Wales and then started doin' the tubes in Twickenham.

TH Right, right and he met your Mum in London?

KT Yes, met my Mum and whatever.

RB Where's she from then?

KT She's from Amalfi, in Italy, come over here to Liverpool, an' then she came down here and met my Dad.

RB Why did she come here then?

KT Her Dad came over an' 'ad a shop

RB Is she half Italian?

KT Yeah, most people in my family are Paddies.

RB Did you have brothers and sisters?

KT There's 3 boys and 3 girls.

RB Are they still..?

KT Only 1 sister left.

TH You used to talk about how easy it was to get a job

KT In my day gettin' a job was, I mean, I couldn't live today. You walked out, I mean I was 14 in school, I missed the GCE mock exams, and they said, well you might as well leave. So they chucked me out of school, and I went to the Sunday Times as a Messenger Boy. Done that, then at 16 I became a solicitor's clerk, because the money was better. 17 I went down to St Pancras Goods Station and became a Goods Porter. 18/19 I became a dustman.

RB So, you'd already been working 5 years?

KT The hardest job I ever did was a Goods Porter at St Pancras Station, fuckin' 'ell that was somethin' else. That was 'orrible. That was sewn up by the fuckin' unions. You're there, right? These fuckin' wagons came in. You 'ad to either get [goods] off the trucks and put it on the wagons or off the wagons and put it on the trucks. Whichever way the union boys [had it stitched up]. A wagon would come and had a big fuckin' this, that and the other, 20 tonnes! Another one'd come in and it was a load of feathers. I'm makin' this up but you get the idea. You got paid by weight! The Union guys always used to come out top.

RB So, there was a group of young people? You must have made a lot of friends down there?

KT We started a football team down there, ah, it was good fun, it was good, yeah.

RB You like football then?

KT I used to like football, yeah, I was no good.

RB I don't think I was either but what position were you?

KT I was a right half, in them days.

RB Proper days when you had a heavy ball, a leather ball?

KT I 'ad steel toe caps on the boots.

RB Yeah.

KT You need them to kick the balls

[Laughter]

RB When it rained, it got really heavy didn't it, I remember, just remember when I was young doing that.

KT When I played football, after 15/20 minutes you couldn't tell who was who, 'cos it was so muddy you never know who the fuck was [playing].

[Laughter]

We used to move the ball, used to put it on the wing, because it was the only place you could put it 'cos in the middle it was all mud. We used to play over Regents Park, fuck me, some of the games we 'ad.

TH You used to play The Pink Floyd, didn't you

KT I played with the Pink Floyd, yeah. My guv'nor in the garage, Don Salvage, 'e used to be into loads of people and, we was in the place called Gospel Oak Grove which was just up near Parliament Hill and Nicky Mason, his Dad used to live just up near Parliament Hill, yeah, near Hampstead Heath.

RB He's the drummer?

KT Yeah, and we used to do 'is car. His Dad used to have Ferraris an' whatever different cars. [...] An' I used to play for the Pink Floyd over there. And, fuck me, Nick Mason's shit!

RB He actually played?

KT 'E was the goalkeeper. 'E was crap!

[Laughter]

RB Well, he was a very good drummer. Did the others play?

KT Dave Gilmour was the only decent player. Roger Waters was OK. The manager, Steve, what was 'is name? Steve somebody, 'e got injured spinnin' the coin, fuckin' they were useless. I'll never forget, one time we played, the Worlds End Wonders in Chelsea. We played them New Years Day. Ah good fun.

RB I can't imagine Pink Floyd playing footy. Who played piano for them? Who was it on keyboards?

KT I din' know they 'ad a keyboard. I fought there's guitars an...

RB No, they had a keyboardist, he was amazing. Remember on 'Dark Side Of The Moon', I'm going to have to look this one up. That leads us nicely onto 'passions' besides fly-posting.

[Drinks]

RB So, who was that guy who famously had a pint every poster?

KT Fuck that'd take some doin'.

AB I don't think he did a lot of posters. Maybe 10, 12?

TH A fellow drinker was Georgie.

KT I ain't bein' funny. Dave used to 'ave a good drink. When we used to finish me and Dave, goin' back in the days of old, we'd be finished, our pub used to be the Mamelon Tower which is in Queens Crescent.

RB Richard Wright! He's fucking fantastic. Absolutely fantastic keyboardist. He wrote half the songs. He was very modest.

KT 'E was Pink Floyd? I didn't think there was a keyboardist?

RB Yes, he co-wrote half the songs, he was a very modest guy, lovely guy, anyway sorry.

KT I didn't know that band 'ad a keyboard. Let me tell you somefin' I've never liked the Pink Floyd. 'An you know we

used to go to that fuckin' pub in Market Row, 'an tryin' to get one of 'em to buy a drink. Seriously!

RB Were they tight?

KT They was fuckin' like Oh!? Oh well! [Laughter] Honestly, fuckin' terrible!

RB Was that after the games then?

KT I mean Nicky Mason, 'e was... [Laughter] Nondescript! Dave Gilmour was up in yer face a bit. 'Oos the uvver? The manager was Steve somebody. Roger Waters!

RB I mean they're so famous now, unbelievable.

KT Fuckin' ah they're superstars

RB Well, Nick Mason's just bought Queen Camilla's house, in the country.

KT 'E was a Ferrari man, totally into Ferarri's. I mean we used to be just round the corner, where I used to work, which they knocked down, built flats over, it was a lovely little place.

You went round the corner. You come into this little turnin', on the left-hand side you 'ad a couple a pumps, on the right-hand side you 'ad a garage which was like a workshop and at the end of the road you 'ad a shop which was all the spares, and on the other side you 'ad a [pub?] an' then it went round an' it went down to wherever. What a little enclave, what a fantastic little place! We worked there, an' then they were knockin' it down so we moved to Grafton Road, but what a lovely little place in them days, a dream machine, ya know.

[...]

I think it was, Roger Waters, a bit later on, 'e had a Mercedes Sports 350SL an' 'e came into the garage an' 'ad the engine done. This guy called Dougie Slade, they dun the engine, I'll never forget 'is name. Me an' Don Sal, we 'ad to deliver it to Paris, cos 'e was drivin' or wherever 'e was gonna go. So, we 'ad to deliver it to Paris, so we get the car, it's all been done, finished, we should work 'em out a bit but, no 'ad to drive it straight to Paris so 'e can carry on. And I made Don, cos I was only a kid, I said to 'im, I've gotta go up the Eiffel Tower!

RB Did you?

KT Yeah, 'ad to. Yeah.

TH Well, you've always loved cars, I mean you've got an E Type.

KT It's a lovely car, love it to bits, drive everywhere. I drive it, start it up, gotta wait 'cos you've gotta let it warm up, do this, that an' the other, gradually get it up, an' you get it up so you go down the Motorway, fuckin' up an' down the Motorway, do an hour's drive. I pull up, which I did the other week, pull up outside my daughter's 'ouse. Walk in, say, 'ow you doin'? [Then] the fuckin' thing won't start again.

TH Well, you've had all the engine done, haven't you

KT Engine's done. All the bodywork's done. Looks a lovely car. Dream Machine. Half an hour an' it'll start. It's happened more than once, it's 'appened 2 or 3 times. So, I do know there's a problem, I know the faults. So I went to a garage, strangely enough, yesterday to see my mate Scott at Scotts. When I stop it won't start! It's a proper garage. Na, not interested!

I said, it's gotta be summit, a coil or summit. When it gets hot, when it's cold, it starts, drive it. It can't be difficult. But 'e's not interested. I've gotta find an E Type [garage].

RB Oh right, OK.

KT I mean it's so embarrassing, if you went into a petrol station, fill it up, but can't start the cunt!

AB You can go somewhere but you can't come back.

KT It's all nice 'an shiny then you're pushing it to one side.

TH Then they laugh!

RB Keith Harvey had a nice car didn't he, apparently?

TH Yeah, he used to fly out with the cars.

KT Yeah, dunno what 'e 'ad.

TH There are stories that he drove around and put the posters in the back.

RB And Hutton had lots of Rolls Royces, didn't he?

KT Who? Oh Dave Hutton.⁹

RB I think he had 5.

KT I tell you what, Dave Walker, when 'e came into the garage, when 'e came into Slater Walker [indistinct] 'e was only fuckin' young, but 'e said to Don Salvage [that] e's an ex Rolls Royce mechanic. But anyway, whenever we got a Rolls Royce in, he'd give Dave a chance to make some money. Whether Dave knew anything about the fuckin' things, I'll never know.

[Laughter]

RB Did anyone complain then?

KT 'E used to say, I dunno what everyone was getting an hour in those days, but 'e used to say, it's gonna be fuckin' 20 quid to me, we'll work on that.

TH We heard another great story coming back from Majorca?

KT Minorca. Where we 'ad to pick up the jeep, yeah, we 'ad to pick up a Willys Jeep, Terry The Pill 'ad a Willys Jeep in Minorca.

RB What's a Willys Jeep?

KT Ah, it's an American Jeep, you know, in the War, the old American Jeeps.

RB Ah yeah, with the open...

KT Just open, totally open thing. In the War all the American GI's 'ad a Jeep, a Willys Jeep, 'an we 'ad to go to Minorca to pick it up. We landed in Minorca and, fuckin' 'ell, the 'welcoming party' was a Soraya with a tray of champagne, as you walked through the customs, got out, there she was with a tray of champagne. We spent 4 days in Minorca, then we 'ad to drive back. We 'ad no papers. Fuck all. We got on the boat, we got off, got to France, on the French border with Spain. I said, stop! I think I was driving, pull over there, fuckin' ell, the clutch went. So, the clutch 'as gone. So, we were [still] driving now, because you can drive without a clutch, driving through France, we 'ad to get to Calais or whatever and we found a scrapyard, so I'm talking to 'Pierre' about what we're doin', this, that an' the other. Dave's under the bonnet of a car. 'E's getting a couple rods that look about the same length as we need, Dave was a bit of a mechanic an' I was a bit, so we knew what we needed.

[...] because we had to go round [the Boulevard Périphérique] in Paris and you need to be able to 'ave a clutch. So, we did it.

RB Sounds like 'The Great Escape'!

KT Ah, fuck it, 'ow we got back, the fuckin' fumes, the car seemed to do about 2 miles to the gallons, do ya know what I mean, we stopped, filled up 'an we were stoppin' again.

RB And this was Terry's car, was it?

KT Yeah, what the fuck 'e ever did with it I'll never know.

RB Nice adventure though.

KT Ah fuckin' 'ilarious. It was a great we 'ad a week doin' that, a week to go 'an do a car.

RB Have you got any photos of the old days?

KT Na, we dn' 'ave phones 'an things.

RB Yeah, it's a pity that.

TH But there are other stories, were you involved with the Rolls Royce.

KT Ah, Marc Bolan.

RB Were you involved in that one?

KT Na, I wasn't involved

[Drinks]

TH We should talk about George though.

KT Georgie B? I ain't bein' funny, we need to talk about you! You were fuckin' part of it all, you were a big part of it Tim. You were a pain in the arse!

[TH laughs]

You know that! When we started off you were a pain in the

⁹ Dave Hutton was a successful South London printer and promoter who instigated many fly-posting campaigns.

arse. 'Cos you and London Calling, Impact an' all that all drove me fuckin' mad.¹⁰ You know that anyway.

TH Well, we kind of a got on quite quickly.

KT Oh yeah.

TH I mean that was all done...

KT 'Ow many times did you get hauled to court abou' fuckin' problems? All the time!¹¹

TH Take me to court, yeah. I did like Terry, you always had a thing with Terry didn't you? But he was always quite...

KT But, Tim, I knew what was goin' on on the streets. I'd be out there seein' what was goin' on.

TH Yeah.

KT We 'ad a deal didn' we. I said do the DC's, the 4 sheets [are ours].

TH I brought the 4 sheets into you guys anyway, didn't I?

KT That's right. I ain't bein' funny, we're talkin' abou' it, but you've gotta talk your bit, you 'ad a lot to do with it.

RB Still do!

TH Yeah. Well, one day.

KT You're still doin' it. I've moved on, you're still doin' it.

AB You're still solving problems!

[Laughter]

TH Solving problems!

KT You've been doin' it since abou'...

AB We started '87. [To TH] Well, you did a little bit for Hackney Empire and Tall Pete before then, didn't you, before then?

Because we made a film and we had a 30 grand debt and the only way we could pay that off was by fly-posting. So, I fly-posted with Tim for about 18 months, we paid off that debt and

I never wanted to see another poster [in my life]. Because we were still running a theatre group during the day and we'd go out at night and weekends. Once we'd paid that debt off, Tim went off and got his brother involved, obviously Chris was Manchester, Tim was London, so we had that. Brit Pop happened, so all that happened at the same time, then I had a year away.

KT You did fly-postin' as well?

AB I fly-posted from 1987 to '95.

KT Whereabouts?

AB Well, I said last time we met, I went over one of your posters in Covent Garden and you rang up Tim and bollocked him, Tim bollocked me and then I had to go out with you to repair the 'damage' I'd done in Covent Garden. Because I used to do Covent Garden on a motorbike. I had one pannier of paste, one pannier of posters, it was really great to get around. Yeah, I went out with you in your van and you said, go an' repair that site! And I dutifully did.

[Laughter]

KT I remember Mark as well, one time, Mark 'ad to fuckin' come out.

TH Oh right, bloody 'ell.

KT Yeah, but you've been a big part of it. Fuck!

TH Yeah, well, I love it. I mean I think it's a great thing that you love it as well.

KT You started a bit later, but you got involved and you outlived all the fuckin' the London Calling, the this, the that. You kept on top of it, you kept on doin' it and, you know, I say, you were lucky with Mark.

TH I was lucky, I learnt a lot, actually.

KT An' Terry Jones came into your lot as well, didn' do you any 'arm. I know they were off with me, but they didn' do badly.

¹⁰ London Calling and Impact were leaflet and poster distributors.

¹¹ Terry 'The Pill' Slater would 'hold court' at the Slater & Walker offices to iron out grievances between fly-posters.

AB That's why I probably ended going out with Terry.

KT You went out with Terry as well?

TH Yeah, Terry was a good bill-poster. Did he do 48's before? I mean he knew how to do a 48. We didn't know how to do a 48.

KT Yeah, 'e was doing them. 'E was doin' all sorts of different bits. But, yeah, 'e did 48's. I got 'im doin' 48's for me an' 'e was good. I don't know, but I think Billy poisoned 'is mind a little bit, but I won't bore you with it. So 'e left us and 'e came to you. But, I mean, you've bin very fuckin' instrumental in fly-posting, Tim.

TH Yeah, yeah, you've always loved it haven't you? [Over and above] the idea of making loads of money. It's done us all very well.

KT I loved it!

TH I mean Nigel's great but whether he actually liked posting...?

KT 'Nigel wouldn't put posters up. You put posters up. I put posters up. We're fuckin' 'ands on. I know you're not now!

[TH laughs]

RB Still time!

KT Not like that. Not in a fuckin' suit like that!

[TH laughs]

TH It's funny 'cos I've been in America, 'cos I always like to show them how to put a poster up. [...] You know when you put the 4 sheets between your legs?

KT Yeah, of course.

TH And then you throw 'em up. It's easier to keep them isn't it!

RB Who was it who kind of developed those wobbly legs from doing that? Walking around like that!? [Laughs]

TH Ah it was funny, yesterday Peter just turned up. Peter Brighton.¹² We were doing this small film shoot in Shoreditch.

AB 6 o'clock in the morning, minding our own business.

TH Kinda ripping down posters [that were posted on top of his posters]. So, he's still out there, going out ripping down.

RB Why would he do that?

TH He just turned up.

RB Senior moment?

TH He's obviously working for us. Talk about me dressed, today. He was dressed in his best clothes at 6 in the morning. It was very funny wasn't it?

AB Yes. He appeared out of nowhere!

TH The reason I keep going back to George is that...

KT My brother in low, 'e was an ex-bank robber.

RB Oh really!

KT Yeah.

[Laughter]

RB Always good to have one in the family!

KT Such a good lad, honestly, 'e was so funny.

RB Was he a successful bank robber then?

KT Ah, no. 'E got caught!

[Laughter]

TH I think we once had a discussion about how long he'd been in prison, something like 18 or 19 years?

KT He's bin in an' out. One time 'e went missin' on a weekend. My sister couldn't find 'im. We were all lookin'. I found 'im in Wormwood Scrubs nick. 'ed bin in there cos 'e 'adn't paid somefin.

So, Saturday afternoon I gone down, dun whatever, I don't remember the situation but I'd paid everythin' up, walked in,

¹² Peter Brighton used to work for Slater & Walker and for himself. He struck a deal to work with TH.

gone in, an they were lettin' 'im out. George didn' know I'd paid 'is bail. So they were lettin' 'im out. I said, OK George, I've paid it.

Ah, fuck, 'e said. I was in the semi-finals of the fuckin' snooker. If I'd stayed 'ere til Wednesday I'd 'ave paid it anyway.

[Laughter]

'E 'ad a go at me for fuckin' bailin' 'im out!

Another time 'e got involved wiv a bunch of lads, whatever. Where we were in Kilburn, we 'ad an office in Kilburn and a bit underneath where we 'ad the paste and whatever.

RB Is that where you moved from the garage then?

KT No this was a different garage in Kilburn.

RB So, you had a yard then?

KT No, we had an underground garage, we had an office above it and down below we had a yard that was all enclosed, it had gates. George had this place, righ' an' he went out with these lads one weekend. [...] So 'e said to me, they've gone out an nicked somefin' and they ended up getting 10 tonne of tea in tea chests, unmixed an' they'd got it down the garage. One mornin', little bit after it happened, Ol' Bill came down to the garage an' George 'ad this fuckoff dog, this dog would go an' fuckin' kill lions. So, the Ol' Bill come down. George looked out the gate. Put the dog away an' open this fuckin' gate or we'll shoot the dog! Wen' in, found all this fuckin' tea.

RB Well, it would be hard not to find it.

KT George an' the gang took 4 hours to put it in. The Ol' Bill took 2 minutes to get it out. We called it 'The Kilburn Tea Party', and 'e got 6 months for that. Yeah, 'e ended up in Aylesbury Nick. My Mum used to love it, 'cos on a Sunday we used to go an' see 'im. So, my Mum used to love goin' up to Aylesbury Nick. We got a table up there to see George, come back an' 'ave dinner in the pub.

[Laughter]

AB Johnny Murphy had a lovely story about when he was in Ford Open Prison, sort of sunbathing. Because he has a background in fruit and veg and used to do gardening at Ford and send

lettuces to all the other prisons. One day the screw said, we haven't got enough lettuces. And Johnny said, it's alright, we just put some dodgy leaves on the bottom and then you put the nice ones on top. It's obviously what he used to do when he was in the market.

But we've been doing these interviews and then we give the interviews back to people to see if they want to take anything out and he redacted the whole of 6 pages of the story of him being inside. He was only saying things like, the screws used to get us Cracker Barrel Cheese. Because the cheese was so awful inside, they used to smuggle in nice Cracker Barrel cheese. And he was just going on about sunbathing, and how nice it was, he doesn't really say anything contentious, but it's like he doesn't want to share that part of his life, maybe because his kids will read it or something?

KT Have you ever moved onto Glen and John. Glen Arthur and John Sheath?

RB I spoke to Glen Arthur and then he just completely disappeared. I don't know why. I was supposed to arrange a meeting through Mark Platt. Mark said he's not very well. I don't know what happened to him. He just didn't ring back.

KT And John Sheath? He disappeared, yeah? He was his partner. John and Glen were together. John was a lovely man. I know Glen, obviously. But John was a lovely, lovely. 'E was the Navy. I really got on well with John.

TH He went on those trips in York didnt he?

KT Yeah, we dun whatever, yeah. Yeah, John an' Glen, I got on well with 'em both, good lads.

RB Did you get on with Dave Hutton?

KT No.

[Laughter]

E's OK, we got on to a degree, then somefin happened. I can't remember what it was now but fuck' em. He phoned back and said, don't you ever put the phone down on me again. And put the phone down!

[Laughter]

So 'e sent Johnny Murphy over to come 'an pick me up.

RB Really! What did Johnny do?

KT He didn' come over. I was more scared of Sue.

TH Sue was great. Actually, we should see Sue, Sue Hutton. She ran everything. She was scary.

KT Yeah

RB Is she still OK?

TH She was making sure Dave was alright when we met.

KT She was more open than Dave Hutton.

TH She ran all that didn' she?

KT Dave used to blag about this, that and Sue used to [have a different opinion]. Oh alrig', I'll go with you, Sue.

TH Put Sue Hutton on your list Ade! I keep forgetting Sue.

RB Yeah, Lol was asking about you. I told him we were meeting today. We went to see him a few months ago. He talked for 6 hours!

AB Lol's stories were great, weren't they!

RB I only asked him one question!

[Laughter]

KT I ain't bein' funny. Lol I got on great with.

RB Oh, yeah, he talks very fondly of you.

KT Honestly, 'e was great, good fun. I know I sacked 'im an' everything. Shame 'es not that well. E's not that old. 67? I'm fuckin' 77. I'm an old man.

RB Looking good.

TH We should talk about John Curd.¹³ I mean, John's a promoter and he gave you loads of work.

KT Absolutely.

TH I mean, John goes back a long, long way.

KT An' he promoted everybody.

TH 'E did, yeah.

RB You knew him quite well?

KT Yeah, John.

TH In fact, you lent him money, which is incredible.

KT Yeah. 'E said to me one time, this is going back a long time, I've got a load of 48 sheets now, all in South London, I said, oh yeah? I'm puttin' up me own 48 sheets. I'm puttin' up me own posters. Alright, I've fuckin' got a chainsaw, I'll cut the fuckin' lotta them an give you 'em you back. I said John do what you want but I've got a chainsaw.

Jim Conaghan, he put up loads of boards too.

TH In the North, yeah.

KT Got 'em all down 'an put them in the van. Jim Conahan phoned me up, do you know they're my boards. Didn't you see the Jim Conahan Coat [of Arms]? I said whatever colours they are, you can either come an' pick 'em up now an' take 'em. Next time I take 'em down I'll fuckin' burn 'em. Dun come over South London. Dun some over North London! Jim, come an' pick 'em up or fuck off! Stay South 'an leave [our areas] alone!

RB Seems a reasonable thing doesn't it.

KT It was very simple. There's your lines, stay on 'em! I 'ad these [other] guys, oh fuckin' 'ell!

TH Oh, the Hells Angels?

KT Puttin' signs up [that said] Don't touch! I just said, fuck

13 Paul Widger of the Canadian pop rock band The Box from Montreal described meeting infamous music promoter John Curd (at a Hammersmith Palais gig 31/07/1983) as follows: "We found him in a rather plush room away from the remorseless din of the Joke. John Curd, a heavily set figure with black crinkly hair, was sitting behind a large wooden desk with piles of cash stacked up in front of him. "What you want?" he growled. On explaining who we were he went all Bob Hoskins in "The Long Good Friday" on us. "Oh you've come for your money 'ave you? Well, well - we'd better pay you then, hadn't we?" He counted out the notes and pushed them towards me. Sensing my hesitation he breezily added, "Right, you got yer money, now fuck off". "Er, we were promised an extra £150 if the gig sold out". Hoskins returned. "Oh - were you now? Well then - we'd better pay you that too then, hadn't we?" he seethed. Grabbing the extra cash we headed briskly for the door without waiting for a second invitation to fuck off. Stepping outside, the demonic groan of Killing Joke came as a welcome relief. Terry seemed utterly shocked. It's a murky old world." Source: Drummer Phillipe Bernard's website: <https://www.mylifeinthemoshofghosts.com/2023/09/06/gig-61-killing-joke-the-box-play-dead-sexbeat-hammersmith-palais-london-sunday-31st-july-1983/>

it. I took 'em all down, chucked 'em all away. I wouldn't have nuffin up.

RB Weren't you ever worried about violence?

KT If I'm very honest with you, probably terrified.

[Laughter]

RB You sound very uncompromising?

KT I 'ad no choice.

RB If you let them in, they'd be in wouldn't they?

KT Whatever you did you'd probably think, shit, what's gonna 'appen? I 'ad a guy called Russell Black, he used to work for the circuses, I was doin' the circus posters. I went to the circus, and I said, is Russell Black there? If you're tellin' me 'es got a shotgun I'm [indistinct]...

Another guy called Johnny Langdon. 'E's only a little guy, the 'Nine Stone Cowboy', not the Rhinestone Cowboy! 'E came out fly-posting an' there was this [circus] guy Russell an' 'e was a big guy an' I said if I go down, you 'it 'im on the 'ead. You did what you did. Scared as fuck. Terrified!

AB We're trying to do a map of where various people were. Why did you [and?] Fred Rowe have a little bit around Embankment?

KT I tell you wha' 'e had. 'E had goin' up Kings Street towards whatever. Then across the road. In them days he was only doin' the small posters.

RB How did you meet Fred then?

TH Stiff Records and all that. Stiff's Madness.

KT Where did 'e do?

TH Wimbledon.

KT 'E was doin' outta town, Wimbledon bits and pieces an' 'e brought Mark into the company. Yeah, Fred Rowe, yeah.

RB So how did Fred just suddenly decide to start fly-posting then?

KT So 'e was also an ex-bank robber.

RB Another one who got caught.

KT We just met 'im through whatever.

TH I think Wimbledon, nobody was really doing it. I think he did a bit of Reading as well.

KT I might 'ave met 'im via Nigel. Probably via Nigel.

RB Then you gave him posters did you.

KT Never.

TH We never gave him posters. I mean, Kevin rarely gave out posters.

[RB laughs]

KT I'd give 'em out to outta town but rarely in town. If they wanna get their own posters they can get 'em. I made it very plain. It's very easy.

Glen and John were really good, 'e was as good as gold, Glen, for a long time, then 'e went missin' a bit. 'E went missin' an' I said, Glen, like, you owe me 25 grand. 'E said you owed him some money. So, you actually paid him?

TH We had to do some crazy deal!

KT Then 'e went missin', totally. John went missin' earlier.

TH Long, long time before that.

KT John was a lovely guy.

TH Also, a great keyboard player!

KT We were in New York, on a fuckin' jolly. 'An this John, 'e was massive. Solid. An' we were in the bar an' we were 'avin a drink, 'avin a laugh. And John wanted to play the piano. So, I said to the geezer, let 'im try, see what 'appens! An' John played the piano an' 'e was like Liberace. Fuckin' 'ell! I got a job in the bar, they gave me a job. 'Cos John was playin' the piano, I started singin'. Your voice, you'd get rid of every customer! But John was amazing on the piano, yeah, 'e was really good.

RB So where did you go on these jollies? You went to Amsterdam, New York?

KT We went to Amsterdam, New York, we went to Hamburg. Fuckin' good night in Hamburg.

RB Is that where Terry went originally, wasn't it?

KT Belgium was so boring we got a car back 'ome.

RB I'm sure Belgium for you lot, don't really suit you, would it?

KT We dun loads a fuckin' trips, it was good.

RB I really like that. That kinda team-building shit.

KT I don't know abou' that, we all got pissed.

We was in Amsterdam, with Georgie Potter, we're all gone there, all gone out, we got back in the hotel. Next mornin' we were all sittin' 'avin breakfast, no George. 10 o'clock in the morning, [he] walked in. Where you bin to?

'E was pissed the night before, got picked up by the Ol' Bill. 'E didn' know where 'e was stayin'. The Ol' Bill took 'im into their nick, put 'im in a cell, kept 'im til 9 o'clock when the fuckin' travel agents opened. Phoned 'em up an told 'im which hotel he's in. 'E walked back into the 'otel. 'E was fuckin' 'ilarious, George.

One time at 'ome, my Mum 'ad a flat an' they're sittin' there an' George 'ad to go out and get the meat on a Saturday morning. 4 or 5 o'clock, he 'aint come 'ome. So, there's no fuckin' meat for Sunday lunch.

[Laughter]

So next Saturday, Margaret goes down to get the meat, George comes 'ome, 'es walked 'ome with some meat a week later. 'E said, I told you I was gonna get the meat.

RB Double meat!

KT One of 'is greatest stories was, 'e was an ex-bank robber, 'e was dun for carryin' a gun. Banned from carryin' a gun, this that an' the other. They put 'im in the Army 'an gave 'im a fucking 25 pound [...] They've banned me from 'avin' a gun, they've now given me a 25 pounder! I can blow the cunt up!

[Laughter]

RB Fantastic.

KT Ah, fuckin' 'ilarious, George. 'E said one night, Margaret's makin' a carousel. Not a casserole, a carousel!

RB What was his second name?

KT Georgie Potter. I called my dog George.

TH Actually, Geoff Massey was an odd element in the whole [fly-posting set up]. Going up to Harringay.

RB Is he still alive?

KT No 'e died. Is Rita still alive?

TH Rita, I don't know if Rita's still alive. Yeah, Pete would know.

KT Geoff Massey, righ'? 'E 'ad The Angel, and 'e was doing that for us.

TH Well, his Dad is.

KT Yeah, 'is Dad's doin' all that, in this end of the world.

TH Well, [round] here wasn't it? Yeah.

KT He wouldn't do a lot. 'Is wife, Rita, she wanted 'im to do everythin' but 'e wouldn' do nuffin. I 'as a row with Geoff about work 'cos I'd give 'im work an' 'ed come round an 'e wouldn't put it up. So, I said, fuck it I'll start puttin' it up and, it was really funny actually, 'e 'ad 'is son Paul.

TH Oh yeah.

KT Another, let me tell you, bank robber. 'E was about 17 years and 'e [chuckles] 'e used to go bank robbin' on a scooter because 'e wasn' old enough to 'ave a licence.

RB What a little 50CC thing?

KT Yeah, but 'e was a kid weren't 'e?

TH Yes, he was a kid.

RB How did he do the bank robberies then? Did they walk in and say, give us your cash?

KT Yeah.

RB What with, did they have like a gun? And get away on the scooter?

KT I don't know, today if you walk in a bank you couldn't get your money out anyway, even if you've got money you can't get it out.

RB Strangely enough last week when I was in Spain, I met one of my old mates, Johnny Fingers, he lost a finger blowing up a bank. He'd written a book, he was really proud of his book. Then he told me he was going to die. 'Ere he is Johnny, lost his middle finger. [He's] living in his motor home talking to squirrels!

KT You've got to take up the mantle, you're doin' loads now.

TH I'm kind of worried I don't remember things. I didn't realise I got rid of Bill Power!

KT You came in very early. You've got lots to say about this. You really 'ave! I remember you so much, I mean the fuckin' shit I 'ad with you. 'An e'd go out, you'd do a nice little job, 'an e'd go above yer and round yer. An' 'e pissed a lot of people off.

[TH laughs]

Honestly, righ' or wrong. 'Ed do it everywhere. I'd think, oh fuck off.

TH It's funny we used to do all round Cricklewood. It's all fun though.

KT I actually loved every bit.

TH Yeah, that's the key, isn't it?

KT I still love it, because it was good fun. And Tim, you were good! You're takin' over the mantle, you've done amazingly well. I take me 'at off to you. 'An you're movin' on and I tell you sumfin, you ain't silly wiv it. I mean to walk up in a fuckin' suit like this!

[TH laughs]

You gotta be sumfin else! I can' even afford a pair a trousers!

[Laughter]

I can't believe the man.

TH It's going to be good to get Nigel as well. I've broken him down.

KT I'm seein' 'im on Thursday. I've tried to get Dave Walker down again.

TH Ah, you're speaking to him!

KT I said, 'ow you doin'? 'E said, great, blah blah blah. I said, Dave, whenever you come down, phone me an' I'll meet you.

RB Is he alright?

KT 'E was a really good mate of mine. We 'ad a couple of 15 rounds but that's irrelevant, that doesn't matter. Nigel was fuckin'...

TH But Dave is OK? 'E's doin' alright?

KT 'E chose 'is path, I chose mine. 'E went to Spain, yeah, 'e bought a place over there, early '70s, whatever, that's when we met the Soraya. [...] Dave, 'e might not like me so much, but I ain't gotta problem. Vincent Stitt was 'ilarious.

RB What did he look like, Vincent?

KT Grey 'air. Rupert The Bear jacket, a checked jacket, all the time. 'An one Christmas we went to my brother-in-law, George's 'ouse in Hampstead. Willoughby Road. 'E was on 'is own, Christmas afternoon, whatever. So we go to the William IV, Peter's local pub. We're in there 10 minutes an' the guvn'er says, if you don't get that cunt off the counter I'll...

'E was up on the counter dancin', tap dancin'. So, we get 'im off, deal with 'im, go back 'ome, it's Christmas night. Next mornin' when we get up George goes [where's my shoes?] Vincent walked 'ome in George's shoes!

[Laughter]

RB He was a bit older, wasn't he?

TH He was involved in Musicals?

AB He sounds like a performer.

TH He was.

KT Because we were near Hampstead, the 'orses in the Police Station, this, that an' the other. Vince used to go along picking the shit up an' put it on 'is roses. God's truth!

‘E had a lovely house, 257 Goldhurst Terrace. An’ at the back, the next-door neighbour ‘ad an apple or pear tree. So, what ‘e did, ‘e pinned out a fuckin’ sheet on the floor so when they dropped down, ‘e could get ‘em without [them] bein’ bruised.

TH So how did he make his money? He couldn’t have made it all through fly-posting?

KT To be honest, Tim, I dunno.

AB As far as I understood, he used to run events in town halls, dance halls. He reckoned he invented Miss World. With the Morley Brothers?

KT It was a lovely ‘ouse. I dunno if it was ‘is ‘ouse.

TH He’s one person nobody seemed to know much about, isn’t he? Peter would go and get his money off him..

KT We all did. We’d go there in the mornin’ ‘an you’d know if ‘ed ‘ad a drink cos the car was ‘alf on the pavement, ‘alf in the fuckin’ middle of the road. Seriously, it was all over the fuckin’ place.

[Laughter]

TH It’d be great to have photograph of it.

KT You couldn’ trust him, no, not at all. If you shook ‘ands you counted your fingers. It was that bad. It was fuckin’ murder.

TH Well, we kind of made contact with Terry’s daughter. But we haven’t moved it on, but it would be good to.

KT Terry didn’t actually do a lot. Terry never fly-posted. ‘E got the work in an’ we ‘ad to do it. ‘E knew a few people in the record industry, so ‘e got us some work that way.

TH You had a row with Walker about?

KT One day, I’m talkin’ to somebody abou’ work, this, that an’ the other an’ ‘e [Terry] come ‘an ‘ad a go at me. I took ‘im downstairs, said, you wan’ me to run this business? Don’ ever talk to me like that in front of people. If you do i’ll ‘ave yer fuckin’ spark out. I gotta run this, you goin’ a talk to me like this in front of people?

RB Yeah, good point.

TH Well, you were doing it all, weren’t you?

KT I’m not gonna big it up, but no Terry, ‘e used to walk in the office, in the mornin’, me an’ Nigel, whatever, Ann. ‘E’d walk in. Feet up on the desk. Cuppa tea please Anne. 10 minutes later, cuppa tea please Anne. Fuckin’ ell, that’s all ‘e ever did. He sat there ‘e didn’ do anything.

TH Rod was there.

KT Rod was there to save us fuckin’ about. When Dave sold out in 88, 89. A year later [Terry] sold out, we paid ‘im a lotta money. They both went.¹⁴ Me an’ Nigel then ran the company properly. A new van, somebody ‘ad a crash, a new van! Before that, ol’ Post Office vans, this that an’ the other. We changed.

Nigel loved chattin’. My daughter came into run the office when Anne was away an’ she said, all Nigel wants to do is chat about you! Feet up on the desk.

TH Crocodile shoes [laughter] and that gold Rolex which had jewels!

RB Was Nigel still sellin’ posters then? At that time?

TH Yes, he was still doin’ it. He used to do deals with the printers, didn’t he?

RB Who was printing for you by the way?

KT Capital Printers. Reg, yeah. ‘E tried to buy the gaff. ‘E came along an’ wanted to buy it. Dave and Terry wanted to sell it to ‘im. This guy was gonna pay a million quid. Reg ‘an ‘is wife. They phoned me, can we meet? Dinner in the Westend. Me an’ the wife went.

The said, righ’, we’re gonna buy the place, 1 million pound. [They said] you gotta buy so many shares, you gotta buy 50,000 pound worth of shares. I said, ‘ang on, you’re payin’ for the company, you want me to pay?

Yeah because we want you to stay, if you don’t stay, we won’t buy it. Well, I’m not fuckin’ payin’ 50 Grand to stay. ‘E said we’ll lend you a deal. I said, ah fuck ‘em. They walked away. Why the fuck’d I wanna pay to do what I’m doin’ anyway?

14 Dave Walker sold his share of Slater & Walker in 1988. Terry ‘The Pill’ Slater sold his share in 1991.

AB Doesn't sound like a great deal

KT Fuckin' Reg somebody, whoever. Lovely, 'e bought me dinner, I enjoyed that, thank you. I walked out said, go fuck off!

RB Yeah, well you certainly seem to have stuck by your guns, your principles.

TH You always say, Kev, everything's black or white

KT That's right. Tim, you've done it with me.

TH We've done loads, yeah.

KT We've done deals on a handshake. Nothin' [else] involved. 'E's been good as gold. Never a problem, on the 'andshake. You've gotta talk to Tim, Tim's done loads of this game. Honestly, I'm dead easy.

TH Well, that's the great thing, it's easy to deal with you.

KT Yeah, do that and we'll do that. I tell you, that man'll stand up, no problem at all. Far as I'm concerned anyway.

[TH laughs]

RB Ah, I totally agree.

KT Well, you've dealt with 'im long enough?

RB Since 1 was about 3 years old.

[Laughter]

KT Exactly, so you know what' he's like. 'E's a stand-up man in 'e!

RB He's 5 years older than me and he always fucking will be.

KT Is 'e a stand-up man or what?

RB He's quite an amazing person, Tim. I think he changed fly-posting into art a bit.

KT Absolutely.

RB That's what changed the whole dynamic.

KT Without a shadow of a doubt. I got outta it, he got into

it an' he's moved on. I admire Tim for doin' that and I've told him enough times. I'll take my 'at off to Tim. I love you for what you've done. I could never 'ave done what you done.

When I met Tim, I gave 'im a van, 'e gave me the steerin' [wheel] back! He was a competitor. Now, lookin' at him now. I love every second. I love 'im doin' it.

RB You were like his mentor or whatever.

KT Now I do gardenin', a bit o' fencin'.

RB Is that from originally building so many boards?

KT Yeah!

[Banter about gardening, dog walking, making fences, keeping busy, KT's kids.]

KT A boy an' a girl. The boy's 50 odd years old used to work or Tim, 'e packed it in a few months ago. The girl's 49, got 4 kids.

[Banter about what other fly-posters say about KT]

KT When we created an area, it was all totally new and we said to people, you can't do this, we do it. You can't. Carry on. You put the posters up, I'll cut 'em all up.

RB You were very brave.

AB I think I said this before, that, one of the reasons you and Dave were successful was that you'd already had a proper job.

RB Discipline.

AB And you approached fly-posting as a proper job. Whereas the fly-by-nights, they'd have one job, [and] fuck about.

KT One job. I used to go out there. I tell you it was funny. Fuckin' 'ell I used to blitz the fuckin' area.

RB It's lovely to post over somebody else's posters!

KT I tell you the other fing, used to piss 'em off: put 'CANCELLED'.¹⁵

¹⁵ It was common practice to paste a 'cancelled' strip over a poster put up by a rival fly-poster.

RB 'Sold out'.

KT I'm sorry it's my area! Don't worry 'bout it, let me do it. All I can think of is good days. I used to go out Saturday, Sunday morning. Me an' my mate John used to go out Sunday morning. We used to play snooker at 11 o'clock in our club. If we didn't turn up at 11 o'clock, the lads said, they've bin nicked.

One time I was in the Nottin' 'ill nick with Peter. We were in this cell doin' 'pennies up the wall'. 'Is penny was up there [close to the wall]. The geezer opened the door, 'e said, 'ang on, give us' another 5 minutes. I'm winnin'! These stupid things you remember!

AB The way we've framed this part of the research is that we're talking about '73 to '93. Myles Cooney put his first poster up in '73, because he was involved in student promotion.

KT I remember Myles, comin' down to Cricklewood, never 'ad any fuckin' money.

Righ', I'm gonna 'ave a Jimmy boys, then I'm gonna go.¹⁶

ENDS

Transcribed by AB and JJ
(18,578 words)

16 Rhyming slang, a 'Jimmy' is short for 'Jimmy Riddle': piddle.

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]

KT enjoying a pint.

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.

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- (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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