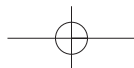
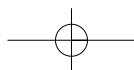
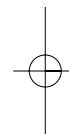
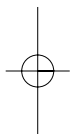


2Stoned



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Stoned



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Written and Produced by
Andrew Loog Oldham

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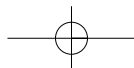
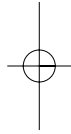
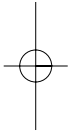
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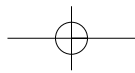
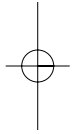
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2Stoned





1964: AMERICA

On 1 June 1964 at New York's formerly-Idlewild-recently-renamed-Kennedy Airport, the Stones were welcomed by a few hundred girls that London Records had managed to round up. If the Beatles' landing a year earlier had been directed by Cecil B. de Mille, our arrival was helmed by Mel Brooks. All those Yank cars that had seemed so exotic and out of reach back in Blighty were a dime a dozen in the States. In the drizzle of the Manhattan drabness, they looked strangely cumbersome and lacklustre. Once we left the airport we were invisible; not a soul knew who we were. The movie was out of sync with life as I'd known it, jump-cutting between black and white and colour. The voices didn't match the picture. Putting reality together with the movie was a strain, and as for the soundtrack, it had become a hollow-reverbed nightmare – the audio was wrong, all wrong. I don't recall being excited; all I remember is being scared.

The Stones stayed at the Astor Hotel on Times Square. I saved some money and went looking to get myself recharged and to cadge a sleep on Phil Spector's ground-floor office couch on the East River somewhere in the sixties. Phil's office was a dull, couched and plywooded affair – his taste was strictly reserved for vinyl. I was not invited upstairs to the penthouse residence, where, I believe, a marriage was on the rocks.

The Stones were a small cult, a collector's item, i.e. we didn't mean shit. They did *The Les Crane Show*, hosted by some

stagger-brained, lacquered pimp with a smile and demeanour so cut out and fake we felt like we'd stopped off on the wrong set and were in *Hogan's Heroes* meets *The Twilight Zone*. God, suddenly old Auntie Beeb seemed great and far-seeing in comparison and we missed her so! It's okay to have your home kind question and ridicule you, but I took this vulturistic gnawing and nit-picking at the Stones' very soul as a personal violation of all that was dear to me. Brian Jones looked liked he'd been turned inside out, his heart and soul flayed and scalped before his very own eyes. He hurt and we hurt for him, though nowt was said except a curse on those stillborn Yanks. If we'd anything to declare at Ellis Island, perhaps it was that our skins were not as thick as we'd thought (the Stones' collective leathery eye had not yet formed).

But that was all about to change and did, with Charlie in the lead, as we were stalked up Seventh Avenue by some creature from the Manhattan radio lagoon named Clay Cole. Cole looked like an electro-shock Anthony Perkins on steroids. His questions never got past 'Why did you grow your hair?' What a dolt! Didn't he know this kind of banter was reserved for the Mop Tops and Herman's Hermits? The movie snapped back into focus when the dapper Watts told this inane prick to fuck off. He did, and we moved on up to 57th suddenly feeling whole again. You might say we were spoilt brats who didn't much care for this new bashing we were getting abroad. It was the old 'Christians and lions' game. It was the original *Planet of the Apes*, and I was feeling more like Roddy McDowell than Mr NRA.

From the papier-mâché *Day of the Locusts* New York reception we winged to Los Angeles, hovered over it, and arrived as LA's surviving movieola barracudas were shit-deep in make-up and cliché. Just another day in the celluloid killing fields. Yes, I was pissed off. The plane had bad lighting, most of the colours and fabric were tired and inspired by vomit, façade and

2STONED

3

disease, and the stewardesses looked best in long shots, evoking Sandra Dee and all of Alfred Hitchcock's best blonde apparitions.

The image on the West Coast screen momentarily moved from B-movie to VistaVision as Phil Spector's right-hand promo man Sonny Bono greeted us at the airport with an open heart and hand to La-La Land. There was hope yet. Thirtysomething Salvatore Bono looked as whacked as the Stones – and he worked for a living! Bono was all Sicilian LA heart. Clad in barber-pole striped trousers, an Italian sweater of the sort thus far only dared by Carnaby poofers, sole- and heel-less calf-length Indian moccasins, and paisley neckscarf, he was a sight to see. In his car boot were boxes of Caesar and Cleo 45s because, in those pre-'I Got You, Babe' days, he was part of a duo called Caesar and Cleopatra with his then-girlfriend, Cher.

The next day the movie went back to black and white as we started rehearsals for *The Dean Martin Hollywood Palace Show* – the first surprise being that there was no Dean to be seen. A week of rehearsals with a Dean stand-in followed. Meanwhile, Deano was out on the links, touching up his tan. He turned up for the filming, immaculate and decadent (which equalled rich), and proceeded to insult the Stones as his way of getting in and out of a commercial break and into the bowels of America's suburbs and heartlands. The insults one could handle, and the goodfella laconicism – just. It was not having thought of a stand-in for Mick that hurt to the management core.

James Phelge, *Phelge's Stones*: Not much news was getting back to the office regarding the Stones' progress on the tour. I rang Keith and spoke to him at one of the hotels where they were staying. He was generally 'knocked out' with America, saying they might be going to the Chess studios and that the tour was going great. We only spoke briefly as he was busy with a press

conference and I was running out of change for the pay phone, so I didn't find out much more. I had to wait until they arrived back in England, when we met up again at the office for a full debriefing. The boys had spent a small fortune on clothes while they were away and were determined to show them off back home. Most of the clothing was lightweight American summer wear and Charlie looked particularly cool in a finely striped blue-and-white jacket that Andy Wickham, Andrew's PR guy, described as 'surf wear'. Some of it certainly looked as if it belonged on a beach.

I asked Keith about the television show when the band had met Dean Martin. Keith turned up his nose, describing Martin as a 'right fuckin' offer'. Apparently he had given the band a hard time, making them the butt of sarcastic jokes at every opportunity. Mick had tried to be sarcastic in return by saying it was 'so nice to have Mr Martin on our show', but that sounded somewhat tame, if not childish.

ALO: Apart from the Dean Martin experience everybody enjoyed Los Angeles. You could see a lot more of the girls in such a climate and, LA being LA, the Summer of Love was already here. Most of the girls didn't need to undress; they already had. We got good news from England – the album was still no. 1. On the 5th the Stones played their first US concert at the Swing Auditorium in San Bernadino. A lot of enthusiastic fans showed and placed (even if the promoter didn't). The Stones felt better for it; they were back doing what they did best.

Sonny Bono took us for a ride to the RCA studios on Sunset. That afternoon I met three important elements in the Stones recording future: Jack Nitzsche, Dave Hassinger and the RCA studio itself. Thank you, Sonny, for being an angel in your own time and helping us find our breath.

We next flew south-west to San Antonio, Texas, on

2STONED

5

propellers. Here in God's country our East Coast education in buttoning our lips served us well. In San Antonio we weren't just freaks, we were rodents. The Stones were to play two days at a State Fair. Wood-panelled station wagons manned by off-duty good ol' boys greeted us with surly what-the-heel-kinda-freaks-we-got-here? disdain. Some mellowed out when they realised we weren't 'contagious or queer', but we didn't when we realised that we were due to play directly after a *grand mer* troop of performing seals. The menfolk chewed gum, cud or baccy. While scuffing their heels in the sand, they eyed us like bulls on heat at the idea of some pansy-quiffed matador for dinner. The more enthusiastic girls, well . . . Whereas in LA girls just wanted to touch and be touched, down near the border they were a little more hands-on. They wanted to poke, squeal and see if we were real.

The mood was tense. This was not turning out to be the America of anybody's dreams. For once the Stones and I didn't have much to say to each other. Something was awry and it wasn't us. We had a crisis on our hands and I needed a serious diversion – quickly – that would save the moment and allow the band to get their druthers. We weren't scoring except for the sex, which wasn't going to put us high on the charts, either, except in a doctor's office on a 'my dick stings when I piss, doctor, and I'm due home in a week' basis.

How to keep the dream alive? Keep it moving!

While the Stones Barnum 'n' Bailey'd, freaked 'n' geeked at the State Fair, I worked the phone in the downtown two-storey San Antonio motel. The bookings were lacklustre, with far too many days off for a three-week tour. New York and Detroit were somewhat promising, but the idea of Minneapolis, Omaha and Harrisburg without a hit record did not bode well. We'd left our status behind in our faraway homeland. After one year of solid slogging through and finding our recording legs and then beating down the Beatles' braveheart wall by winning fans north of St

Albans via performance, we'd jumped on to our first 505 transatlantic flight and kaleidoscoped into this crazy, half-baked, mid-60s, partially Beatle-ised USA playland without the benefit of even Tom Wolfe. We'd made it through two pseudo American wonderlands – the Brill-funky-Broadway of New York and the surreal beach-party mind-bend of LA – and now we'd been unceremoniously plunked down into this sawdust fiasco in San Antonio. In a normal life, one should have enjoyed the rest, the dust, the breeze and the change, and given thanks for the opportunity to break bread and visit a piece of America in all its very own life-affirming, cattle-prodding, queer-baiting glory.

But I was up for, and we had time for, no such thing. Brian made some effort to be at one with the locals, but with him it was hard to tell what was real and what was an ongoing, insatiable cry for attention. Bill and Charlie put bullets in their respective guns, with Bill firing blanks at every Miss Motel America in sight and Charlie trying out some genuine six-shooters on the outskirts of town. Keith, I hoped, was writing about it, while Mick rested his self in the arms of Texas, writing about *that* (I also hoped). I starred in my own *Parallax View*, gnawing my quicks nigh to the bone, wondering how to stop this reel from slipping the spool as I turned for assistance to my old pal, the phone.

I called Phil Spector and asked him to get us booked just as soon as was possible into Chess studios. Phil called back and said he'd set up two days of recording time, two days hence. So I was all beam and sheen when our driver, a *Cool Hand Luke* type, stationwagoned out to the State Fair grounds for the last day of the Stones troll. I wondered if somewhere behind the glare of his prison-guard reflectors he'd heard of the late Lt Andrew Loog. If I told him that my father was from Texas, would that change anything? I doubted it. I bit my tongue, now as sore as my nails, and resisted. There wasn't any point in engaging in small talk or trying to explain what we were doing there.

To them we were stone freaks – or worse – but compared with what was to come in the Brit export line, we were more akin to Herman’s Hermits. If they wanted to see themselves reflected in a distorted mirror they’d have to wait for the Sex Pistols, who would launch themselves at Randy’s Road House down the road some thirteen unlucky years later.

As I wondered whether I’d dressed down enough for the locale, I pondered why Texans seemed to dress only in denim and beige. Was it so they’d match up with the upholstery, with earth, ergot, barley and sage? And why was it that these beer-pawed Texans always drove one-handed, leaving their right arm curled around the passenger seat as if it were their goddamn God-given right to have someone curled up next to them? I felt too thin, wimpy and wiry to have my potential Texan fatherhood taken seriously by these big bad johns. After the long dust-filled ride over I happily greeted the lads. We now had something really exciting to talk about – the mythical Chess studios.

All of them saw me beaming and knew something was up. ‘Pack your bags,’ I said. ‘There’s a change in the itinerary; we’re going to Chicago to record.’ From their all-at-once heartfelt smiles of wonder I knew that it was still worth playing God.

James Phelge, *Phelge’s Stones*: If the Martin show had been the low point, it would soon be overshadowed by the trip to Chicago and Chess recording studios. Brian would be incredulous at the fact that he’d discovered one of his musical heroes at the studio painting the ceiling. Muddy Waters was up a ladder when they arrived and had climbed down to welcome the Stones and help carry their guitars into the building. Keith revealed that some of the ‘live’ recordings issued by Chess were not recorded that way at all. In the Chess archives were reels of tapes with nothing but audience noise recorded upon them. Chess used these to dub the ‘live’ effect on to whatever tracks they chose. When I asked Keith

what the likelihood was of getting the same taped audience on two different records he replied: 'Not much chance, they've got fuckin' miles of it.'

ALO: But playing God was just my sideline, actually. Getting records cut was my principle business. Chicago was a piece of heaven on earth for the Stones, for the earth was scorched on most of our mid-American concert stopovers. We hadn't set any records; we didn't have the goods. 2120 South Michigan Avenue housed Chess Records and Studios and in two days the group put down some thirteen tracks – their most relaxed and inspired session to date – moved, no doubt, by our new-found ability to sell coals to Newcastle. Who would have thought a bunch of English kids *could* produce black R'n'B in the States? And here they were in the *sanctum sanctorum* of Chicago blues, playing in the lap of their gods. The ground-floor room was a gem, as was Chess engineer Ron Malo. He treated them just like ... musicians. The derision, jibes and plain stupidity of the American deejay goblins were left out in the gutter. The Stones were to South Michigan Avenue born, and the session was a joy to behold.

Keith Richards, *In Their Own Words*: Back (in the old *Five By Five* days) when we were recording in Chicago and Los Angeles, we used to go down to the local record stores, buy up a whole bunch of soul singles, sit down by the record player and learn 'em – things like the 'Oh, Baby (We Got A Good Thing Going)' and the old Otis Redding stuff. Then we'd record 'em as quickly as possible.

ALO: Nothing sensational happened at Chess except the music. For those two days, the Stones were finally true blues artists, and legend has it that true blues artists didn't have producers – they just came in and got it done. I was producing the sessions in the

2STONED**9**

greatest sense of the word; I had provided the environment in which the work could get done. The Stones' job was to fill up the available space correctly and this they did. This was not the session for pop suggestions; this was the place to let them be. Oh, I may have insisted on a sordid amount of echo on the underbelly figure to 'It's All Over Now', but that was only ear candy to a part that was already there. I remember being impressed with the order of things, and how quietness and calm got things done. I remember meeting Leonard, and/or perhaps Phil Chess, and being cognisant of the fact that there was no suppressive Limey stymieing from the head office to the factory floor.

Truth was, the Jews and blacks were equal on the Yankee nigger parade and the shared affinity showed and glowed in the music. There was no knighted vinyl baron, pinstriped and up in the clouds, no war-pensioned doorman with orders to separate the wheat from the chaff, no scum line below which the artist could sing, swim, tour and sink. There was just a factory floor, and a very relaxed combo of artists, musicians, engineers and salesmen all at one with each other and getting the job done. I think it's called a democracy, for all its warts and whores. It was all inspired, but one track, 'It's All Over Now', would bring the Stones a little bit closer to our devoutly-wished-for consummation, the real deal – a genuine American hit.

>> **fast forward to 1965**

ALO: I had written the sleeve notes for the Stones' second album in the bath for a laugh, seeing just how close I could skate to the land of Anthony Burgess. There was no concerted effort to be controversial – I was just doing what came naturally to me at the time – the violent rhetoric I didn't give a second thought to. I was just very busy being me. The result would be surprisingly rewarding in terms of publicity, coverage and outrage.

Questions were being asked in the House of Lords about my sleeve notes, particularly in reference to my recommendation that Stones fans take up mugging blind people to secure the funds to purchase their records! The National Association for the Blind were in a visible uproar and Lord Conesford demanded to know 'what Government action' was planned to remove the offending notes. The Home Office stated that 'there was no evidence that these words had been published in circumstances constituting a criminal offence'. Even Decca *jefe* Sir Edward Lewis made a rare public statement: 'I am told this inscription was intended to be humorous, but I'm afraid this jargon just does not make sense to me.' I was thrilled by the uproar – but it hadn't really been thought out at all; I was just lucky enough to be standing in the right place in the right mind. The publicity definitely helped draw attention to the second album, which, with the group's next step into casual brilliance, won over another horde of fans.

The Stones looked under the rug where white America had swept the cultural rhinestone of R'n'B and culled nine passionate anthems. They tipped their hat again at Chuck Berry with 'You Can't Catch Me', leered and laughed their way through Alvin Robinson's 'Down Home Girl', and rounded out the nine with three originals which blended seamlessly with the classic covers.

I was about to celebrate my twenty-first birthday as the Rolling Stones stepped on and off the plane for their first tour of Australia and New Zealand. The journey was long, boring and economic. We cut across Europe, the Near and Far East. I remember waking up as we stopped for fuel in Bombay or Calcutta and being amazed to see the runway, a concrete maze of tufts of garden inhabited by packs of dogs nonplussed at our landing. Twenty-four hours out of London, far from Tulsa, I reached for the schlap, offered it around to a grumpy group of young men and prepared for our landing Down Under. We arrived at Sydney Airport to be met by 3,000 rabid fans and a press conference. Another cut from *No. 2/12x5*, the Drifters' opus 'Under The Boardwalk', had been released as a single and greeted us from the no. 1 position.

Harry M. Miller, promoter: I had signed the Rolling Stones for the first tour of Australia, but without any large venues in which to play I was going to look rather foolish. In Sydney we checked out several potential sites, including the open-air White City tennis stadium, and committed my Pan-Pacific Promotions to spend AUS \$40,000 for the conversion of one of the big pavilions at the Sydney Showground into a concert hall. The place needed a lot of work. We had to build a dressing-room block, run miles of wire for new sound and lighting systems, construct a high central steel stage and knock a hole in the concrete floor to the storage area underneath to provide a stairway for the artists arriving in the underground car park. The place had a seating

capacity of 7,500. Of all the pop and rock 'n' roll concerts I presented none was more exhilarating than that first tour by the Rolling Stones, not just because of the obstacles to be overcome but also because the Rolling Stones were so plainly on a raw surge to the top. We co-starred them with Roy Orbison and the Newbeats, all of this for admission prices of two and a half to three and a half Australian dollars. I signed the Stones for AUS \$12,500 a week (a little less than they now command) for which they had to give up to thirteen performances a week, and paid for the accommodations and economy air fares for five Stones and three managers. Over a three-week tour of Australia and New Zealand it added up to an outlay of almost AUS \$100,000, but we grossed about AUS \$250,000 at the box office. Perhaps I was a little mean when I refused to bring their own amplifiers as excess baggage. They could bring their guitars but that was all I was paying for, is what I told Andrew. 'We've got perfectly good amplifiers in Australia.' 'Christ! Who are we working for – Scrooge?' he shouted at me down the phone. 'We're all working for our bank managers, Andrew,' I told him. 'And if we don't keep a lid on the cost this whole thing is going to blow.'

ALO: In just two days the Stones would give five shows in Sydney. The audiences were wild and woolly and the Stones loved it as they searched for their land legs after a day and a half in the air. There were plenty of nubile young offers to help them; even I welcomed such an assist. The Sydney press wrote up that the Stones were a national scandal, shocking and ugly, blatantly sexual both on stage and off. They intimated that the band was up to no good with the nation's minors and virgins and were indulging in all-night orgies of the flesh. 'I wish we were!' was unfortunately the only quote of mine on behalf of the group that made its way back to London. The truth was that, all work and party allowed and aside, the Aussie and New Zealand summer

2STONED

13

replaced the English winter and provided us with a well-earned holiday.

On the Stones' first gig in a Sydney tin shed, along with wishing that the Opera House had been completed in time for us, my main duty was insisting that, while on the revolving stage, Roy Orbison, the Newbeats and the other acts had to turn 25 per cent between each song and remain stationary during the song. The Stones, on the other hand, were to have the stage revolve slowly all of the time. This was an early example of downsizing the competition. Outside of that I could concentrate on enjoying the Stones by night and getting a suntan by day.

The only violence on the tour occurred when a Newbeat all but had his balls bitten off by a Maori could-it-be-hooker during our New Zealand stopover at a hot spring – the result of his requesting some unchivalrous below-the-belt sexual act. Even the retiring Mr Orbison laughed at the thought of the new heights of falsetto that might be reached that night.

Gordon Spittle, writer: We stand on the Dunedin Town Hall seats aged fifteen with shoes on and wave and yell / 'What A Nice Way To Turn 15' / It's like the son of a teacher man is out of the room and out for the count / Where the Stones were different was this sense of progression, hope and daring / Something offered beyond our appointed future compartments as freezing workers cutting up sheepmeat / Back at the show Ray and the Invaders wore bankers' suits – albeit purple – and played as sharp as Hank B. Marvin / Mick and the Stones wore T-shirts, striped sailor tops, buttoned shirts with pin collars and no tie / That 'dadadadada-dedadada da-dadedadadyadeda' of 'It's All Over Now' was as easy as sliding two fingers / It sounded so good and smooth, it had such east and west semi-tones I had to read some more Herman Hesse / When the tour arrives in Dunedin, Eddie Chinn on Rattray Street sends an invite round to the Stones at the

Town Hall to visit his Sunset Strip Club / With a name lifted from the 77 *Sunset Strip* crime series on the new televisions of the time, the Strip has an all-American finger-clicking ambience that suits sailors and scientists getting some 'rest and recreation' leave in Dunedin between weeks on picket duty on Operation Deepfreeze boats / The room capacity is three hundred people / Yank sailors smoke Camels and French Gitanes and play pinball / Waitresses wear canary yellow, serviette-sized skirts to collect glasses and ashtrays in buckets / At the counter there are 'Cokes, Coffee and Snacks' / Under the tables whisky is mixed with Coke / Sailors trade rare cargo during an era of foreign currency controls / T-shirts, jeans and pea-jackets, Lucky Strike ciggies, aftershave, Black Label and an occasional piece of Fender musical equipment from California and the bassline from Wilson Pickett's 'Land of a 1000 Dances' / When they arrive on Rattray the Strip is packed / Everything stays cool till Eddie pops off his flash camera at Jagger and Andrew Loog Oldham cavorting on the dance floor / *Flash* goes Eddie. One on top of the other. Andrew Loog Oldham is leaping to his feet and screaming, 'No photos, no photos!' Eddie being Eddie is smiling frantically saying, 'Yeth, No Foto, No Foto!' / Oldham extracts the film from Eddie's camera and that's putting it mildly / Within a year the Stones are back but only for shows in the North Island / The Pretty Things have toured south of Cook Strait and Viv Prince has set new phews of pandemonium by wearing a leopard-skin hat to breakfast in an Invercargill hotel / This follows setting fire to the Town Hall curtains in Dunedin / The Dunedin show is great, all wailing harmonica and twelve-bar jams that could only have been followed by Them and Van Morrison / Viv is eventually held and deported at the airport. Then the British invasion tapers off and the touring shows of twenty-minute brackets fall apart after uncontrollable visits by the Who and Small Faces in 1967 / And that's the way it was.

ALO: In Auckland the hotel took one look at us and wouldn't let us in. We got the same deal in Wellington, so had to fly back to Christchurch to a hotel that would have us. In Invercargill the Stones were greeted by a chorus of boos. The audience expected a headline appearance from Roy Orbison and barracked the Stones show with non-stop 'Bring back Roy'. Mick managed to outrage the Southland farming community with post-show comments that had him quoted as saying, 'Invercargill is the arsehole of the earth and the local residents are a mob of sheep-farmers.' I hope Mick's not having to visit Invercargill on his next solo tour.

By the time we played Melbourne everybody was getting used to the lazy summer pace and will-they-or-won't-they let us stay at the inn. In Melbourne, the John Bateman Motor Inn would. It boasted a manageress that would have given Honor Blackman a run for her money. Mick and I took turns ogling and making moves, while other members of the group concentrated on the daughters. We water-skied and even Brian relaxed. He left his mental luggage in the room and became a hearty skipper driving the speed boat as we skied all day. It was too hot for Mick to come out in the midday sun, so Keith and I concentrated on getting our tans to last till London. We walked and talked the length of the beach and wrote 'I'd Much Rather Be With The Boys'.

Harry Miller: The Rolling Stones came to me at a time when the knee-jerk adult reaction to them was that they were Neanderthals – an impression they seemed to delight in reinforcing with their aggressive behaviour and shaggy appearance. However, I found them to be remarkably well-behaved young men. They were never late for a show, never missed a plane or a bus and never cost me a cent in the heavy indemnities I had to take out for their hotel accommodations. They were never short of girls but that

was their business and I thought they handled it with great discretion. On stage they always gave 100 per cent, even on the nights when the police and security had to disengage rampaging female fans from around their legs, waists and other parts. Andrew gave me the most beautiful grey worsted double-breasted blazer which I wore till the moths ate it to pieces.

ALO: The next leg of the tour was an uncertain trip into the Far East. A promoter associate of Harry Miller's named Freddie Yu flew down to check us out. He had to be sure of the group's behaviour, to see if they were suitable in the matter of saving face. The group passed the test and travelled to Japan and Singapore. Keith laughed and wondered quietly as we landed, 'So, Andrew, did they teach you a new way of saying, "Give me the fuckin' money"?'

When we arrived in Hong Kong Freddie Yu limo'd us to his penthouse for an array of food, booze, pornographic movies and hookers. The first bunch of ladies offered were over the hill and out of teeth; none of us wished to partake. The next batch paraded were marginally younger and prettier, full-bodied and full-toothed. They were followed by a final parade of teens and early twenties. We decided that somebody had to do the honours – we were, after all, in the land where nobody should have to lose face. We drew straws; somehow Bill Wyman won and saved the day.

In Canton, then a part of mainland China but still under British rule, the Stones arrived in the middle of the night to play, none of us having any idea where we were. We were whisked from a military airstrip, escorted by machine-gun-clad jeeps, to a circus tent in the middle of an eerie nowhere. It was all scary shades of the later *Apocalypse Now* in which Freddy Yu was Bill Graham and the Stones were fresh Bunnies flown in for the troops. The audience was 6,000 up-and-at-'em actual screaming

2STONED

17

British soldiers. The show went incredibly well. Bill Wyman made an exception on this occasion and resisted taking a fan back to his room to discuss the finer points of the show.

The next morning saw the group's last Far East appearance. We were guests of honour at the British Embassy for lunch. We figured that news of our reputation was slow to reach these parts; the taxpayers' money was being spent so that the ambassador's kiddies could ask cute, stupid questions and get autographs for themselves and their school mates. We were able to laze this final day away among the Gone-With-the-Empire white marble pillars and immaculate forever lawns. On the white linen veranda we took a four-or-more-course luncheon, waited on hand and foot. We were all bowled over by the tour's second pearled and tanned lookalike Honor Blackman winner, in the form and shape of the very sexy ambassador's wife.

We returned to London via Los Angeles, where we recorded the next Stones single, two new Mick and Keith originals, 'The Last Time' and 'Play With Fire'. After changing clothes at the Hotel Nameless and wolfing down hamburgers, fries and beer, the group, Ian Stewart and I headed down Sunset to RCA to rendezvous and grab that magic. In just one year Mick and Keith's songwriting had graduated from sappy ballads to commercial ballads to album material for the Stones and, with the two songs we were about to record, had finally cleared that last hurdle – to a real, live single for the Rolling Stones.

Al Schmitt, RCA engineer: Studios A and B at RCA were both the same size; they were big rooms. Then there was also studio C, a smaller room. You could mix in any room. The studios had very high ceilings and nice parquet wood floors. One of the things that made them so unique was that we had all those great live echo chambers. Seven of them, I think there were. This was all pre-multi-track. There was very little overdubbing done then. The

nice thing about doing everything at the same time was that you knew exactly what it was going to sound like. When you started layering things you were never sure. Then a lot of experimenting came in and it took longer and longer to make records and the expenses went up and up, incredibly.

RCA had a great, great microphone collection. Just fabulous. Great Neumann and Telefunken microphones. Great RCA mikes. Plus they had the great, original Neve console. It was just spectacular. The old Neves are so punchy, so warm – still one of the finest consoles ever made. We were using a lot of Scotch recording tape then. Dave Hassinger learnt most of his microphone technique from me – what microphones to use and how to use them – that’s the most important thing. There were no isolation booths at that time, none whatsoever. But we had gobos, we would move them around like separators so you could semi-isolate things. We did have some small rugs that we would put down sometimes under the drums and things, but there was not much of that.

I produced a bunch of things with Sam Cooke. I did all those early records: ‘Bring It On Home To Me’, ‘Cupid’, ‘Another Saturday Night’. I did a lot of work with J.W. Alexander. We did a lot of motion-picture scoring there for guys like Alex North and Elmer Bernstein. I worked with Elvis Presley on *G.I. Blues* in 1960, 61. I worked with Shorty Rogers, who also recorded under the name Boots Brown. I was also the engineer on Henry Mancini, Jesse Belvin, Gogi Grant, and Ann-Margret sessions, all recorded at RCA in the 50s and 60s.

The Rolling Stones started a situation where songs weren’t done in a standard four-hour session. They booked the studio for weeks to do their albums. That was new. A little later when I was doing the Jefferson Airplane we block-booked and were there for five months doing *After Bathing At Baxter’s*.

2STONED

19

ALO: After an eleven-hour run, we'd finished 'The Last Time'. I was so thrilled and beside myself with the result, the audio layers were just so total, hypnotic and forever, that I called up Phil Spector and asked him to come to the studio to listen to what we'd done. Everybody had really come through; this was the first Rolling Stones totality. Brian and Keith set up a layer of guitars that allowed Mick and Keith to just sit in the sing of it. I knew we finally had that big American hit; I just wanted Phil to tell me how big. Forty-five minutes later, Phil hobbled in off Sunset Strip in his Chelsea boots to listen to our forty-five. We put up 'The Last Time'. Naturally, the little big man asked to hear it much louder. As the fade never-ended, Phil chuckled, shook his head, and sighed. 'Number Ten, guys, number ten,' he said. He'd be right.

We still had to cut the B side, 'Play With Fire'. Brian, Bill and Charlie, exhausted from the all-day onslaught to complete 'The Last Time', headed for the Hotel Somewhere to crash. An elderly well-rounded Negro cleaner in matching grey shirt and slacks quietly swept all four corners of the cavernous RCA studio A. As the morning light rose on the Sunset Strip, Mick sat back in his stool and sang it, Keith's acoustic gave him something to sing to, Jack Nitzsche played a worldly harpsichord, Phil Spector gave the lining by playing bass – and 'Play With Fire' was cut. If you listened hard you could hear the sweeping and if you listened inside me you could hear my heart beating – we were home.

* * *

ALO: Keith Richards and I shared a great moment together in the Los Angeles of 1965. The shared moment was Frank Sinatra.

The kicks had moved from Route 66 to Sunset Strip. The

Stones and I were on a productive run ensconced, when touring and travelling allowed, at the RCA recording studios on the corner of Sunset and Iver. We were in the middle of a nearly two-year roll, and it seemed we could do no wrong. 'Satisfaction', 'The Last Time', 'Play With Fire', 'Under My Thumb', 'Get Off Of My Cloud', 'Lady Jane', 'Out Of Time', 'Mother's Little Helper', '19th Nervous Breakdown', 'Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby?', 'Paint It, Black'. Mick and Keith's songs just kept getting stronger – on the money and of the moment.

One mid-afternoon I sidled up to Keith in the centre of Studio A. As usual, he was jeaned and slightly scarved, on stool, guitar in hand, fag in mouth, plastic cups around.

'Let's take a break around five,' I said.

'Okay' said Keith, not giving me much thought, not wishing to leave the moment.

Mo Ostin and Joe Smith, the two number ones at Warner/Reprise, had invited me to attend a Frank Sinatra session at 5.30 at Universal (a recording studio, nothing to do with the Universal entertainment conglomerate), a few blocks along on the south side of Sunset.

Mo and Joe built Warner/Reprise from the early 60s into the Warner-Elektra-Atlantic/WEA giant it became by the mid-70s. Ostin soldiered up through the Sinatra admin ranks and came into the Warner's pack when Frank's Reprise Company merged with Warner Brothers Records. Joe Smith began as a deejay at Yale spinning Nat 'King' Cole platters in the 50s. Under their astute professional care, WEA represented the true artists' home. They remain remarkable record men whose ease with themselves, the music and the artists was a pleasure to be around. They were never desperate.

As regards the Sinatra invite, I couldn't bring the whole group – they weren't invited. Anyway, I didn't want to. Mick, as a vocalist and true star, would have had to make light of the

occasion, 'Oh, shall I bring a spare toupee?'

'Can I bring Keith?' I asked Joe Smith on the phone from the RCA reception. 'We may as well have two musicians there.'

'Sure,' said a relieved Joe, for Keith was still thought of as 'the quiet one'.

Keith and I whipped out smartly at five. We stood on the sidewalk outside RCA for a minute watching the Sunset Strip evening rush-hour crawl begin. Then a honk from a black Caddy on the other side of the street beckoned us over to Joe Smith's car.

'So where are we going, Andrew?' asked Keith as we rolled on to Sunset.

'Joe's taking us to meet Frank Sinatra,' I grinned.

'Oh, nice one,' said Keith, surprised but not amazed.

Fifteen Warhols later we sat in the quiet control room of the Universal studio, the engineer fiddling with dials on the consul and me, Joe Smith and Sagittarian Keith sitting behind him on the couch waiting for Sinatra to arrive. A few minutes later arrive he did, though to our surprise he didn't come into the control room. The man walked straight into the studio and headed for the stool in the centre of the room, surrounded by bafflers inside which stood a mike, cans and speakers.

He sat down, adjusted himself into the stool, put a headphone on one ear, indicated he wanted the playback via the headphones and speakers, which were positioned so as not to bleed into the microphone when played at a reasonable level. He snapped his fingers to feel the air in the room, agreed with the shine on his shoes, and signalled to the booth to roll the tape. Frank was ready to go.

We were not many years down the road from direct to disc, the original mode of recording that had replaced cylinders or 'rolls'. After direct to the mono-lathe came monaural tape, then two-track, thus enabling us to hear duplications in stereo. Now in

these mid-60s the biz had teched up and graduated to four-track, meaning recordings could be made utilising four separate channels, which upon being filled would be paired down to stereo or mono.

The evening's song was a milestone: 'Strangers In The Night'. The musical tracks were already in place and ol' blue eyes was crooning into the warmth of the studio. Keith and I sat a wee bit gobsmacked at the pro-ease we were seeing and hearing. In the next forty-five minutes Frank Sinatra recorded two or three takes on 'Strangers In The Night' and two other songs. When satisfied with his handling of a song after two or three takes he didn't stop, or come into the control room, or ask to listen to what he had just done. He knew what he had done and just said, 'Next one', and perhaps, 'please'.

This was high style. We were used to listening and analysing vocal performances on studio monitors, headphones and even car speakers before saying yes or no. The consummate Mr Sinatra knew, at the moment of doing, what was right or wrong.

The three songs recorded, he eased off the chair, put the headphones back into their place cradling the neck of the microphone stand, then walked through the studio and into the control room.

On entering the booth, ignoring us, he slapped the back of the engineer and asked, 'Everything okay?'

The engineer said, 'Yes, sir.' The 'sir' was both mock Bilko and of total respect.

'Okay, you know which ones to use,' came back Frank.

Now that's the tall order. Keith and I looked at each other on that one. Frank expected the engineer to be as tuned to Sinatra as he was to himself. No drama, no questions. You're here because you are a pro and this is how the consummate Frank gets it done. Sinatra turned towards the couched and carpeted visitors' section and Joe Smith got up. They smiled and greeted

each other, arms clasped around the other's arm and shoulder, one dignified notch away from a hug.

'Hello, Frank,' said Joe. 'You sounded just great.'

Frank gave out a ring-a-ding smile and said nothing. He knew, but didn't know, who we were, and now that the work was done, he checked the state of his French cuffs, approved, and wondered – two, three, four – wondered – dropped the smile in all save the eyes and wondered about us with a flick towards Joe.

Joe got the flick. 'Frank,' Joe's left arm allowed towards Keith and me, his right still clasping Sinatra's elbow as we both rose for the occasion. 'I'd like you to meet Keith Richards and Andrew Oldham from the Rolling Stones. They're in from England. I just wanted them to be able to meet you.' Joe, too, was a pro's pro. No unnecessary detail, as in 'guitarist/writer/manager/producer'. Just the facts for the ring-a-ding man – don't confuse the attention span granted.

Sinatra politely – and he did have searing great ol' blue eyes when he put them to you – shook hands with Keith and me, thanked us for coming to see him, and hoped we were having a good time here in his realm.

'You guys know Harold Davison?' he asked as he tugged his hand back.

'Yes, we do.' I spoke for us both in reference to Frank's UK promoter.

'Say hello to him for me. And to Marion.' He ref'd the late singer Marion Ryan, Mrs Harold Davison. Sinatra then said goodbye to one and all and left us alone in the control room.

We were both pretty knocked aback. Keith and I knew we'd just seen an amazing example of the *modus operandi* of a master, and Joe Smith was delighted to see the pleasure on our faces as we thanked him for bringing us to this memorable occasion. We ambled into the hall and were chatting about life in general, or slagging other acts, when I turned and looked down the long hall,

through the glass studio doors out on to Sunset. There, black straw-hatted, black silk- or mohair slub-suited, in a black open Lincoln Continental, waiting for the lights to be green, sat Sinatra at the wheel. There was no entourage, bodyguards, Rat Pack or clan. Just a man, content, alone, the day's work done, joining the rest of the early LA evening traffic, going home.

It was just one of those things, just one of those fabulous things – Mr Frank Sinatra.

Few people have the happy experience of being able to sit and realise they have become who they truly are, to confront the worth of the work. I have, and it is a loud encounter with a clear sound.

* * *

ALO: In May 1965 'Satisfaction' was recorded and released three weeks later all over the North Americas. It was the first Stones US no. 1 and perhaps England has never forgiven its second greatest hitmakers for treating America to this audiogem first, putting the UK in second place with an autumn 65 release. The single had not been released in the UK due to the Easton/Decca brouhaha and the arrival on the scene of Allen Klein, who'd started to handle our business in June 65. Life with Klein moved us to a new and fatter gradient.

The Stones toured the UK in September and October with the Spencer Davis Group and the Moody Blues and then headed straight for the US and their fourth tour across the North Americas, the first with actual money in their hands. This tour would feature at different east/west locations the Byrds, Patti La Belle & the Bluebelles, the Shangri-Las, the Righteous Brothers, Bo Diddley, We Five and Paul Revere & the Raiders. The group

2STONED

25

went away on this tour boys, still fresh, enjoying their new toys. They came back men. The non-stop tour continued back Down Under in January 1966, up through Europe, back to the States, back to Europe (stopping to record at every opportunity in Los Angeles) and then, basically, the first golden run was over. The spark was gone, the glimmer was dim and from April 67 till the second run that began in late 69, *sans* yours truly, the Rolling Stones did not step on stage and there were no more tours.

From May 65 to March 67 the Stones received eight US gold singles for the eight singles released and six gold album awards. When they returned to the UK in November 1966 the boys were tired, wondering about the cost of money and fame, and in need of rest.

One part of their souls resided in a bizarre revisitation of Baudelairean nineteenth-century debauch and baroque, the other in a Neanderthal and pretentious, psychedelically entitled and tripped-out world. With leisure came drugs and their aftermath, removing the need for watchlocks or moral compasses. Mistakes were made as obviously-out-of-it velvet-clad rock stars tripped out of Rolls-Royces into their King's Road abodes. It was much too near both the copper shop around the bend and the real money lurking around the corner. The Stones were tolerated, even loved from afar, while away and on the road they could be 'confused with earners'. But fame and familiarity bred contempt and, while they may have been able to purchase respectability, they were about to learn they were considered neither worthy nor to the manor born. They'd been allowed to lay waste in the suburbs but they were not welcome to sketch arrogant in the drawing rooms that sought to rule their world. Oh, later Mick was allowed back in when he was harmless and had had his claws removed; but the 'in' had always belonged to Keith, and Keith wasn't interested.

Back on that first 64 tour you'll recall I'd been taken by

Sonny Bono to RCA's studio B on Sunset. Jack Nitzsche, with Dave Hassinger at the controls, was producing the vocals for a Spector 'Zip-A-De-Doo-Dah'-type version of 'Yes, Sir, That's My Baby' for Atlantic Records. There was no actual group, just a moniker invented for a group of session singers and friends that Jack and Sonny had pulled together. I watched and marvelled at the laid-back professionalism that pervaded the room, a far cry from the shame attached to the game in Britain of late. This was an original American art form and hustle, and everybody dressed their bodies and minds in their Sunday best and came to work wailing. The chorus consisted of Sonny, Cher, Jackie DeShannon, Gracia Nitzsche and the late Bobby Sheen (aka Bobb B. Soxx of the Blujeans).

Everything felt fine now that I knew I'd found the Stones a new home in which to work. Regent Sound had served its purpose, but it was a Regent's Park rowing boat compared to the ocean-going liner that was RCA's studio A. You could have fitted the Stones and all of Liverpool into the studio and still have found space for most of Manchester. I didn't give out instructions or guidance – well, perhaps suggestions – for we were all learning to bounce off the recording ropes at the same time. Mick and Keith played the tune they'd composed. Sometimes it spoke for itself as to arrangement, or Mick and Keith would have an idea and direction already in mind. Sometimes they didn't and would throw the song over to the rest of the group, no attachment, ego-less, to be kicked around for a while looking for that particular place to go.

There was no reverence, no preciousness allowed – nor mercy. How about a 3/4? A polka, a country swerve? Everything was open roadhouse and anything was possible if it would get the job done. Like what to do with 'What To Do' or what to do with 'Paint It Black'. That song was going nowhere, I thought. Another ten minutes and it'll be time to move on, change the

2STONED

27

energy, flow and song, and perhaps come back to 'Black' another day. We'd only done the second-chance thing once before when, after the acoustic attempt in Chicago, we came back fuzzed to 'Satisfaction' in LA.

At the last moment, either Bill Wyman played or was listening to Jack fuck around with the pedals of the Hammond B-3 organ in a piss-take of a gipsy figure. 'That's it!' I thought. I'd heard the sound and movement that we needed, the whimsy that spelt 'radio'. A grey paisley-shirted, brown velvet-trousered, at his most attractive looking Jagger, fag in one hand, pencil in t'other, dictated lyrics to Keith like M to Moneypenny, a tad annoyed at Keith's having missed a stitch on his lyric dictation and magicmick stream-of-consciousness flow.

'What's "it"?' Mick sighed.

'Mick . . . Bill . . . Jack, do it again.'

I still was not sure whether it was Bill or Jack. We'd finished one track in the past hour, and I'd been out for a joint – we didn't smoke in the control room. I had come back immersed in the texture of my Levi-type bottle-green suede jacket and how it displayed traces of prospected gold under the neon lights of the studio control room. I'd then turned my concentration towards Keith's nigger-brown twin to see if its light held the same gold-rushed imbue. Bill looked over and said, 'Do what again?' Jack looked around and would not commit. 'That thing you and Jack were doing with the pedals.' Bill had been down on his knees playing a bass pattern on the Hammond.

God, don't ask me for definition, or the trap of having to explain. 'Oh, this?' Bill gave his churlish smirk. He knew I held him somewhat in disdain and had doubts I'd ever noted his playing, except for the time I brought it dead centre as the final overdub, hurrah, and run-out on '19th Nervous Breakdown.'

'I was just doodling; I didn't think anybody was listening.'

He smiled on, too long. ‘Do it again before you forget,’ I commanded, not interested in the Formica rationale behind the movement.

‘Oh,’ grinned Bill, insisting on the last serf word, ‘I won’t forget it. I was doing Eric Easton going gipsy on the Blackpool Tower pier organ.’

Even Charlie looked up at that very Fellini-esque image of thought. The room was starting to get interesting and interested. Laughs all over. Bill carried the day. ‘You mean this, don’t you, Andrew?’ Bill did it, Keith had already got it, had clocked in and was ready to work at it. Mick shrugged, got up from the studio stool as in removing the wrinkles or a run, as if decreeing an ‘Okay, why not? I’m here, doesn’t sound too stupid’, and everybody got down to work. Every song got about twenty minutes to find its legs. We averaged two to four songs a day and were in that wonderful stride where we didn’t seem able to get it wrong, anyway. Okay, ‘My Girl’ may have been wrong, the track may have been Ritalin-stiff, but it was a lot of fun to do.

In the previous December’s sessions the Stones were four or so minutes into ‘Goin’ Home’ and to everybody it felt like a great take – *the* take. But as I tapped along and looked through the control-room window into the studio I knew something was up as Charlie looked at Keith, who didn’t look back, and Bill looked at Charlie as if to say, ‘I don’t know either.’ I turned to Dave Hassinger. ‘Dave, they don’t know how to end it; they don’t have a fuckin’ ending.’ Dave, as if *he* could help, looked up but said nothing. A quiet Midwest-seeming man, Dave was the epitome of our Brit view of a John Ford-ish Quiet American. In those first hallowed couple of years at the golden trough of the Americas, all of our meetings were just one reel away and a generation away from the movies, as in the American western. Sonny Bono was the town crier, your younger hippie Gabby Hayes; Jack Nitzsche was the pale pacifist who finds his courage in the last reel; Dave

Hassinger was Randolph Scott, or David Janssen, minus the saddle, spurs or Excedrin.

Lou Adler: When Andrew hit on Hassinger, he hit on somebody sympathetic and he lucked out for himself and the Stones. A lot of the engineers didn't even want to record rock 'n' roll. There was a whole school that thought it was beneath them. They were used to the Frank Sinatras and the Tony Bennetts. Dave Hassinger was a new breed of engineer at RCA.

ALO: Dave Hassinger was tanned, tall and well-built, with slight side tufts of oncoming grey in the temples letting you know the middle years were but a throw of the horseshoe away. He was clad in simple one-colour, no-nonsense light-toned V-necks, white button-down broadcloth shirts, plainsman black trousers, black solid shoes that spoke of military grounding, haircut atop to match, with a thin gold ID bracelet as the only giveaway that he was about God's business – entertainment and the field of dreams. He would have been equally at home on the range or a rig, chewing tobacco instead of smoking it, a man happily at one with his craft. His wife was Doris Day's stand-in, and that just added to the attraction.

By this point the Stones had taken on lives of their own in the fantasies of their fans. Like characters out of literature or the movies, their doppelgängers had escaped and were having imaginary adventures quite independent of them, out there night and day doing outrageous things that the Stones themselves had nothing to do with. Rock 'n' roll delinquents, scourge of bourgeois society, menacing doltish adults, a long-running orgy of weed, women and song.

Back in studio A, Dave turned oh so slowly towards me and shot me a look that said 'there ain't nothing I can do about it'. Now at the five-minute line of 'Goin' Home', the Rolling Stones

kept rockin' along. Mick's vocal was over and he crossed his arms without missing a beat. Keith curled into his guitar, playing away any problem, not allowing anybody to catch his eye. As we crossed into six minutes, it was still the one, still the take, but if something didn't happen and somebody take charge and find an ending, we could be derailed. It didn't matter that the take had eclipsed the four-minutes-tops borderline; the track was holding and I wanted the Stones to make every second of this majestic piece releasable. When they had mapped it out they hadn't allowed they'd nail such a great one that fast, and now they were a plane looking for a safe landing. They needed a real ending; this motherfucker just would not work on fade.

Charlie couldn't catch Keith's eye; Keith would only let me have the sly underbelly of his. I locked eye 'n' grimace with Charlie and started to prance up the dance, as in 'keep the motherfucker going'. His snare picked up the order and the level, the band followed suit and matched tone, and for the next four minutes the train stayed on track resolutely 'Goin' Home'. At seven minutes Charlie looked, I waved a circle, meaning just keep it moving. He looked at me for a few seconds, figured it in and nodded his head. Bill heard Charlie step it up and followed him. Brian and Keith now admitted they were playing together, stayed on the money and got on the ride. Stu shrugged, grinned and started to glide. Mick looked for and found the right harp, wrapped his lips around it, and sucked his way into our ears for ever with a triumphant groan 'n' moan.

Charlie looked in my direction, then made the obvious suggestion by looking down at the floor. The Stones followed suit and allowed themselves to descend to a last *après skasmic* crawl. Eleven minutes-plus on the slopes and spent; thank God we'd had enough tape between reels. The group fell about, as well they should, exhilarated. They laughed, hugged each other and collapsed on the floor. 'Goin' Home' was done and so were we. I

2STONED

31

had just witnessed a wonderful musical moment of the for ever, the Rolling Stones having just broken the sound barrier with ease.

When *Aftermath* was released, 'Goin' Home' was praised by fans, critics and peers alike as a standout event on the recording. In 1965 only Dylan and the Stones had defied the three-minute law – and kicked open the doors to the future

At RCA the band continued that first golden recording roll. Beginning with 'The Last Time' Mick and Keith mastered the art of providing compositional food for the pack. With 'Satisfaction', 'Get Off Of My Cloud' and '19th Nervous Breakdown' they mastered the art of the notional anthem in step with the nation. With 'Mother's Little Helper', 'Out Of Time', 'Play With Fire' and 'Under My Thumb' they came off the street and into the suburban home, opened the diaries, the liquor and medicine cabinets and echoed the shared hypercritical blight that suppressed and splintered American youth.

The Stones' – fuck the other groups – experience of America, and in particular Los Angeles, was limited to wonder, room service, a general sense of affinity (as opposed to hostility), and, overall, a climate and a hospitality that was sunny, grateful and optimistic. One did not have to wait for Robert Towne and *Chinatown* to realise that behind the military/industrial shrubs of Wilshire's country clubs sat the fat bow-tied men who hovered over, controlling all. And therefore, down in the valley on Sunset, Hollywood and Vine, the musical watering holes were a magnet for the voice of youth disaffected by trailer-park squalor – as white lower-middle-class dads returned from Korea without a bean to find their places in the assembly line taken by eager immigrants – and affected by the very idea of having to die in the inhospitable dykes and crannies of Cambodia and Vietnam, as the arrogant military would have them do.

I say 'fuck the other groups' because, in 65 and 66, the

Stones, in their lyrics and attitude, were the only UK import that seemed to be at one with what ailed America. The Rolling Stones went straight from the airport to the studio, to the radio, and to Beverly Hills. Inspired by what they had in fact said and stood for, American hope and fungi started to congregate, compose and rail against the system via music. And this movement was just as middle class, until Hendrix, as the pony R'n'B movement that first attracted Jagger and Jones.

The confidence of the Rolling Stones grew in this time of recording in America, an experience that was, then, unique in and of itself for a British band. We cocked our guns and guitars and took aim at convention, violated musicians' union petty rules and went for it. The Stones were not intimidated. They got America down in America. The Beatles took over America, but the Stones belonged to it.

Opposite RCA off Sunset stood Martoni's, an Italian eatery where we'd stand behind Frank Sinatra to get in and nobody was refused admission. Dean Martin, Tony Martin and Cyd Charisse were always already seated. Richard Conte drummed his dice hand at the bar. Sonny Bono watched us eat with glee, while the rest of the star-studded ensemble paid us no mind in the way the old guard would have back home. They just figured if we had the good sense to be there – enjoy it. We were in the entertainment capital of the world and we started to create pop entertainment for the world. The Rolling Stones and I were in the midst of our finest recording hours together.

I told *Disc* magazine by phone:

The whole set-up is terrific. We completely insulated ourselves from the outside. The boys recorded for fifteen hours non-stop, from 11 a.m till 4 a.m. the next morning. Then we spent the next day overdubbing on to the results, Mick and Keith doing the vocals and editing the masters. As their

2STONED

33

producer I can honestly say these sessions have produced a new Rolling Stones sound, and certainly brought out the best of Keith, whose guitar playing has been magnificent. The only outsider is Jack Nitzsche, playing the Nitzschephone. This is actually a child's toy piano, which is projected through two separate amplifiers. Jack is able to make it sound like any instrument you like; on some tracks it even sounds like a trombone.

This was rubbish, as we know. I was just getting more ink on the Stones by summoning up that mythical instrument. As my Sidney Falco rolled on to the page, the British press managed to daub it with the post-Epstein spin of the day – highfalutin' upper-class manager talking down when talking about 'his boys', a damning I hardly qualified for, as I spent so much of my time, perhaps too much of my time, being one of the boys.

Looking back on that *Disc* item and other write-ups and headlines of the day I am amazed at how the very words and sub-headings used to describe me are a blueprint of the ups and downs of the bi-polar depression I constantly strove to keep in check by accomplishment. 'Accomplishment' – i.e. production – required daily, constant travel outside the body and inside the head, a constant movement of ideas and people, time and space. These were the only ways I knew to keep my depression in check.

It always worked in southern California; somehow that lady never let me down. Perhaps we were as shallow as each other, but, if so, we were deliciously so. Perhaps we bonded out of collusion at the fact of both living above the fault-line. It has been said by myself and others that it sometimes does not pay to meet your heroes. Hollywood had been my hero from the moment – at around nine years of age – I'd first been allowed by myself to set foot in that wonderful dream tunnel of London known as the Underground. It took me from the Mother-protected-and-edited

life of Hampstead and Swiss Cottage to Piccadilly and Soho, but en route (and on return) the film posters that adorned the curved walls glued me to my calling. The powerful Saul Bass posters that described the Otto Preminger flicks of the 50s – *Carmen Jones*, *Saint Joan*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, *Bonjour Tristesse*, *Anatomy of a Murder* and *Exodus* – epitomised the world I fell in love with.

On one level I was provided with an escape as the posters took me out of Baker Street and the mundaned Metropolitan Line straphangers too concerned about their daily lot to escape with me to the Hollywood that pulled and beckoned me with every poster, credit and slogan. I allowed myself to be sucked into that teeming world; I could feel the gun in my hand on a slow boat to Israel, the gun in my holster at the OK Corral. On another level I was getting an education as I studied the Woolf Brothers' Romulus Films and Jimmy Woolf's managerial promotion of Laurence Harvey and absorbed the idea that Otto Preminger was a breed apart as one who produced and directed and controlled his canvas. I marvelled at how Mr P allowed designer Saul Bass his head to explain the work in those ground-breaking canvases that separated the Preminger films from the competition sometimes more ably than the films did themselves. I would later apply to the Rolling Stones the myriad flickering poster images that I took in as my Piccadilly Line sped me south into Soho by paralleling that experience, flicking through a rack of records with an eye towards those whose cover images stood out from and above the fray. Message was everything; content came later and was deemed redundant if your carrier pigeon didn't home.

As life became polar with flights from London to LA, mine became more bi-polar and I upped my self-medication to cushion those days when I knew I'd snap and crash as a result of the highs. I tried to clutch those days to my chest and disappear. Sometimes I couldn't, and whomever I was with would catch the

2STONED

35

black silent swell I became. My mouth would grip my mind in anguish and it was all I could do to mumble in taut pain, betrayed that I had not anticipated the descending wall of darkness, and, having done so, given a witty aside and dived behind the descending curtain to the sound of applause.

Sometimes I'd be *The Manchurian Candidate*, others a rabid *Raging Bull*. I saw *The Man with the Golden Arm* again the other night on a Film & Arts channel pumped down to Colombia from Mexico. Frank Sinatra remains amazing (especially on a one-take basis), Eleanor Parker shows that concern is a dangerous lady and Kim Novak moves like heroin itself. She is the translucent horse I saw abound in slo-motion from the hotels Royalton to Algonquin. The Elmer Bernstein score is balletic and almost the edit itself. The withdrawal sequences are, of course, condensed highlights but, given the 1954 occasion, are still quite restimulative to someone who has been there. And sometimes I still think I hear Mummy; I look up and it's Angela Lansbury barking orders in front of the chessboard.

>> **fast forward towards 1969**

Pete Townshend: If you spoke to someone like Keith Richards about the fact that, ‘Don’t you think that when you listen to a pop record there’s a possibility that it could have something kind of spiritual?’ he wouldn’t know what the fuck you were talking about. Kit Lambert understood that, although he moderated me by slinging me in the other direction. But he understood it and so did Andrew. I think when he left the Stones you were left with a bunch of people, estimable though they were – Jimmy Miller was a great producer, Allen Klein is a brilliant businessman, Glyn Johns continued to engineer for the Stones and got them a wonderful sound – but they’re all journeymen, they’re just journeymen. I always believed the Stones were one of those bands that could ascend the spiritual heights if they wanted to, but they didn’t seem to want to. Certainly they never attempted to do so since the early days.

We’d just recorded *Tommy* when we did the *Rock and Roll Circus*. We did two takes in the afternoon but the Stones didn’t go on until 4 a.m. I think the only people in the audience left by then were me and my mates. Mick kept sending the Remy Martin and I kept drinking it. But what was really going on was much more . . . I believe that Brian was dying. I think he’d already decided to leave the band; certainly I knew he wasn’t going to be in the band any more. Anita Pallenberg, who, with Brian, I’d hung out with in places like Paris (and I’d always seen as Brian’s

2STONED

37

girlfriend) was suddenly with Keith. Brian was just a wreck; he was terrible, he couldn't play. I'd always loved Brian. He'd always been incredibly nice to me, much nicer than anybody else in the Stones, and they kept wheeling him out and in the end he had to sit down and play . . . then they'd take him off again, he'd come back a bit perky because he'd had a cortisone injection or something. He was in very bad shape; he shouldn't really have been there. Mick was spectacular; everything he did was spectacular. If you watch the video he never loses concentration for a second. He's playing to the camera all the time but the band were not very good compared to what they could normally do. You could see Brian Jones was gonna die and you could feel that the Stones were gonna let it happen somehow. I know that's a terrible thing to say; I know it's not what actually happened but that's how it felt to me at the time. Brian was one of the first people I felt responsible for; he'd been my friend.

Sheila Klein Oldham: Brian came around to the house towards the end, shortly before he died. He was trying to smoke a cigarette and couldn't find his face. I think Allen had sent him round hoping that Andrew could find some way of helping him but we didn't know what to do with him. What he needed was good professional care. I think it all comes down to the fact that we don't have rites of passage and don't know how to have relationships and didn't know then. Interventions and clinics were unknown then. There weren't that many people taking drugs in those days that were in the public eye. The Stones were losing Brian, as they would rid themselves of Allen Klein. Brian, of course, did a good job of eliminating himself. Allen Klein would prove a little trickier.

When Andrew came back after the split with the Stones, he injured himself. There was blood all over the house. He'd go into these psychotic rages where he'd try and kill me – he tried to kill

me about twenty times with hammers and all kinds of things – but I was strong enough to get away from him. He was manic-depressive. It's a chemical malfunction and what his doctor was doing with the shock treatment at the time was the worst thing possible. He'd be very up and then very down. This was the worst episode. I could see the Rolls parked outside. I saw him get into the car and then get out of it again – I could see he had a towel wrapped round one of his arms. Then he jumped on a bus. Why, I don't know. I drove around all over the place looking for him, but I couldn't find him. Where he'd gone was this nursing home in Highgate manned by nuns. Took a couple of days to prise it out of his driver, Eddie, where he was. The manic-depression was a regular occurrence and sometimes it would last a very long time. Sometimes it was triggered by going from recording and touring to doing nothing and he'd sink into depressions very quickly. A lot of it was exhaustion and not eating properly. If he'd had some proper help then he wouldn't have suffered that much.

People were idolising him and his ego got out of equilibrium. Not enough support and too much adulation. Idolatry has a specific karma. There's a price to pay for it. It's fashion – you're either in or you're out and it's hard when you're not the flavour of the month.

Andrew's problem was that you can't be on the stage all the time with that particular character he'd created, and I think it got harder and harder for him to switch it on and switch it off. Because the *off* bit was probably the real him. Andrew can be quite sentimental and that was a very private part of him, the vulnerable tender part, and that frightened him. When you get really hurt – that might've been – I mean how he and Mick must've wounded each other is terrible – they probably really, really hurt each other. To have all those relationships going on at once and then falling apart at the same time. Karmically nobody escapes.

ALO: In the Judy Garland–James Mason *A Star Is Born* (1954), when the end comes for Norman Vane (James Mason) he wades with style and dignity (or his double does) into the Pacific Ocean and the next life. Mason's exit is much better than Kris Kristopherrson's pathetic rock 'n' pop cry for attention in *A Star Is Born* (1977), the Barbra Streisland soapadelic. James Mason, with the frugality of the 50s, merely wastes a pair of swim trunks, whereas our boy Kris shows the excess of the time and, in putting himself away, wipes out a perfectly decent Maserati.

Brian Jones's death was dignified, a private affair attended by only 'a few close friends'. He just wastes a life, maybe. It depends on your point of view about completed cycles, the inevitable, and succeeding at your death wish. Shortly before midnight on a humid, balmy Wednesday night, 2 July 1969, Brian, slightly or quite affected by the evening's heat and his intake of drink and downs, got fed up with watching telly and went for a swim in the heated pool of his Cotchford Farm in the plural belt of Sussex.

Less than one month before, Brian and Mick Jagger announced to the world, via Leslie Perrin, in a non-combative united address, that the paths of Brian and the Stones had separated and that Brian Jones had left the Stones. In perfect Brian-speak he 'no longer saw eye-to-eye with the others over the discs we [the Stones] are cutting. The work of Mick and Keith has progressed at a tangent at least to my way of thinking.' Mick added, 'Brian wants to play music that is more his own rather than always playing ours. We have parted on the best of terms.' Twenty-one-year-old Mick Taylor had already passed his audition and would be Brian's replacement in the Stones, making his public debut when the Stones held their free London Hyde Park concert on the 7 July, five days after Brian's death. Taylor came from solid muso stock, having just served time with approval in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and came highly

recommended to the Stones from all of England's board of blues chiefs.

In the last days of May the Stones, with Glyn Johns and Jimmy Miller and minus Brian, were recording at Olympic Studios and invited Mick Taylor in to see if he fit. He did, and the track he sat in with would be the Stones' second national anthem of their second golden run. The hybrid, intoxicating 'Honky Tonk Woman' would take them back to no. 1 in the US two and a half years on from the last chart-topper, 'Ruby Tuesday', in January of 1967.

Mick Taylor had more in common with Brian Jones than guitar excellence and a unique style of playing their first love – the blues. Just as the before-bloated-by-excess-and-pain Brian had been to so very many, Mick Taylor was very pretty – ash-brown long hair, shy and pale. The Stones had another double-header handled for the next five years in sound and image. Tall and thin, he fit right into the triple-threat front line backended by gaunt muscle, and the movement continued at anthem with the times. Still fresh from the club circuits, Mick Taylor's face showed him unused or using, wide-eyed, unabused and eager, with no particular devils in his dance of life so far. He and I would work together only once, in the early 90s, when he gifted my *Ratones Paranoicos* production with his guitar. We toasted ourselves on being the only two to leave the Stones of our more-or-less free will and live to tell the tale. Others would not be so lucky.

Brian had seemed to handle his break from the Stones in a remarkably sober and practical manner, at least on the surface, and I had admired this new-found aplomb from my distance. I hoped that the surface had some substance and that Brian intended to use the split for positive change and not abuse himself, or others, any further. Certainly, he did choose wise counsel with whom to discuss his future, the caring blues

2STONED

41

guitarist Alexis Korner. He was supposed to have been positively feeling out forming a new band, fascinated with and using as his example and role model the American-based pop 'n' blues band Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Fogerty's West Coast combo who'd hit big that summer of 69 with 'Proud Mary' and 'Bad Moon Rising' and who seemed to have struck the right balance between their musical integrity and the selling of it. It was quite easy to understand Brian's finding inspiration in CCR, for there were parallels between him and John Fogerty that he could openly connect with and formulate a solid game plan around.

For Brian Jones, there was no going back to the past of clubs, pubs and the blues circuits of the world; in that year of 1969 a return to your roots would have been synonymous with failure. Creedence Clearwater Revival were a good model, both in the reality of Brian's fame and his situation (i.e. his standard of living and breathing needs). Whether Brian realised it fully or subliminally, he and Fogerty shared not only musical but physical similarities in what they did and how they portrayed themselves. Brian could adopt the frontman persona, without competition from a lead singer's dapper diva danceability, to get back to where he'd felt best and wanted to feel again and do it for the growing festivalistic audience who thought of him as a hero and icon. Brian could also have felt he was entitled to find his voice, the one I'd buried in 63 on 'Walkin' The Dog', and, further, was entitled to write his own music and dismiss my opinion that you can't write down to the public – well, not knowingly anyway.

On that 2 July 1969 warm summer evening in Sussex, Brian's immediate plans were to go swimming. Nobody wanted to join him, so he went alone. A while later he was joined by his girlfriend, Anna Wohlin, and the builder who was living in Brian's house while he carried out renovations. The builder's girlfriend, a nurse also staying *chez* Jones, came out of the house

to check that Brian was doing okay, given his evening's alcohol and chemical intake. She found him to be all right and returned to the house, followed by Brian's girlfriend. On their arrival back in the house the nurse realised that Brian was left alone. She went out again and found him lifeless at the bottom of the swimming pool. What happened next, and whether Brian was alive and for how long after the builder and the girlfriend had joined the nurse and got him out of the pool, becomes and remains a matter of confusion and conflicting opinions, chiefly as to whether Brian was alive when the ambulance and medics arrived and as to the diligence of those who might have sought to revive him. We do know that the police duly arrived, followed by a local doctor who examined Brian and pronounced him dead.

Brian may well have been having a mental revival of sorts that helped buoy him against the trauma of 'deciding to leave the Stones', but a physical revival had been out of the question for a long time. At the coroner's inquest, his asthmatic condition, the possibility of an epileptic fit, and his drug and alcohol intake were examined as to the part they played in his death. The pathologist would announce that Brian had pleurisy, an enlarged heart, and a diseased, excessively enlarged liver. The coroner recorded a verdict of death by misadventure, drowning under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

The swimming pool was an incidental, thrown in for Brian's closing night, for Brian had, for a fatal length of time, been drowning under the influence of life. It is one of the sad ironies of entertainment and life in the public eye that those in the fields of artistic endeavour, where only a minute percentage rise above the odds and find themselves held, often for no self-sustaining accountable reason, in high-esteem by the public, enter this camel-race to fit through the eye of the needle that attracts so many suffering from and cripplingly motivated by low self-esteem. For if the moment of the actual 'doing' is not the moment

2STONED

43

of truth and is not self-sufficient and apparent, and if you find yourself waiting for the applause and approval to confirm the moment you missed in the first place, then you are fucked from page one. Brian was such an excessive arse-licker in his attempts to satisfy his excessive need of everything and everybody that his tongue had to have collapsed along with his liver and other life-giving parts. Brian had no business, except the business of trying to buy approval, of making Ian Stewart the empty promise that 'he would be taken care of' when Stu was told I didn't want him in the Rolling Stones, and that the group were not going to do anything to deny me my wish and my reality. That is, unless Brian had convened Eric Easton, myself and the Stones to have us all agree that Ian Stewart was to be treated as an equal financial partner in the group. No such meeting was called, and Brian's move on Stu could only be seen by him as the pathetic empty promise it was.

Brian's death had no heartfelt effect on me at all. It was the first death I found useless and the first funeral that I did not attend, finding its honour role of inbreds and supporting queens completely pathetic and fake. In the flesh, Brian was one of the first people I'd met who was truly dead on this earth. I can recall his eyes for you – they were searching for something I wish upon nobody, something not even Anne Rice has figured out, but David Mamet understood from the off, and Truman Capote got scared to death by because it was around his every next corner and thought. There was no point in trying to have empathy for the dear monster-child; he'd only use it against you. It was as if, having been granted, like a cat, nine lives, Brian had been sent back mistakenly for no. 10.

In the Stone-by-Stone interviews Peter Whitehead conducted in the September 1965 Irish filming of *Charlie Is My Darling*, Charlie Watts was my darling, entitled as such when it became apparent upon viewing the footage at Whitehead's Soho cutting

room that Charlie, and Charlie alone, was the only member of the group who managed to be natural on camera, and, in that reality-vérité mode, reasonably unselfconscious and true. Bill Wyman came in second, much to the surprise of my effete elitism, with Mick, Keith and Brian tying and dying in last place. Although I said nowt about it at the time, not having the skills to confront this reality without leaving blood on the floor, I remember the cold grim black and white morning I left Whitehead's and walked around Soho Square knowing that the Stones were not to the celluloid manor born. I probably headed for my office and spewed out a hundred film progress announcements to cover my tracks.

In *Charlie*, Brian was in full intellectual mode, spinning his claim to be not only the vision but the brains behind the Stones. He didn't communicate with his interviewer, nor did he listen. He just talked a collection of revisionistic wishful-thinking meanderings, a collection of words, not even sentences, that had Peter Whitehead and I falling about rewinding and playing bits to make sure that Brian had indeed spewed out this nonsense.

'Listen, Peter,' I'd said, 'It's just words; he's not actually saying anything.'

'Yes,' said Peter, 'while the rest beg off from being asked to take themselves seriously that's all poor Brian does.'

It was a style I saw years later developed into a multi-syllable similarity by Jerry Wexler while revising his career into the art it already was. When Brian did say something, it was to tell of movies he was writing, although it was clear they never passed his daydream agenda. This was easy for me to suss, being an early graduate from the school of 'films-in-my-head'. The saddest part was Brian's premonition that he did not envisage himself living longer than twenty-seven years. Be careful what you wish for and just as mindful of what others wish for you – for sadly, on the screen at age twenty-three, Brian was on the road to being right.

2STONED

45

In the middle of the 80s I was preparing a Christmas greetings radio spot for Allen Klein to promote the CD issue of *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)*, the original US hits package, and the rest of the ABKCO/Stones catalogue. I was using as the basic material a backing track, an actual Radio London Christmas greeting spot the Stones had done in 1966, making this new spot not from the used portions of the original but from the unused out-takes. They were funny, off-the-cuff, 'real', natural and happy – the Stones laughing at their own mistakes and their inability to read one line without cracking up. Charlie would mispronounce the album title and Bill would forget to mention he was with the Rolling Stones – Mick and Keith were just giggly Christmas titters. Brian's voice was totally scary and gave me the real chills. It came from a dark and different frequencied, disconnected place and shared none of the joy and mirth of the rest of the group. Brian had his own sound, underground, that I could not edit into Mick, Keith, Charlie and Bill.

It didn't belong . . .

>> fast forward to 1995

ALO: The fifteen-storey white opaque-flanked horse had done its work and delivered its message that 5.15 a.m. Manhattan May 95 morning, striding in slo-mo out of the Hotel Royalton as I de-cabbed on the corner of 5th Avenue and 44th Street. I got my bearings, steadied up from my loaded mind down to my loaded feet and assumed the fuck-with-me-atcha-peril position against real or imagined muggettes. The tall horse of gauze hoofed in perfect Tommy Tune harmony, at one and alone with the battalion marching down the powdered keg that was my head and at two with the empty echo of the perfect street. The horse stepped up on to the kerb and into the Hotel Algonquin to trough with the Indians and report that we'd met and that the rest was up to me. The image of the horse transferring itself into grey liquid as its white woven chassis melted itself into the north side of 44th Street remains a special effects award winner with me forever in my vision, even now. Thirty years in the making, no expense spared in the unmaking of my mind as I finally made it up. I knew I must yell 'Cut!' if I was to go on living.

The gauze bespoke see-through horse, all 15 storeys of Trojan flank and limb, devoid of internal actuals but a sum of magnificent total, had read unto me its warning just by its appearance into my life. The smack, grappa, booze, cocained pillorama and anti-depressant cycle had now converged on to one worn-out rusty rim of tired tread, attempting in vain and pain

2STONED

47

to hold together this spineless spent bird of the 60s. I was way past the days of wine and poses, the daze of letting the body advise that it was getting its needed nutrition through drugs and boozing, a line and a gulp, a resultant flush, sweat and dick dripping, a burst of dying flame amid a sequence of mixed, fucked-up signals of doom and gloomed warning.

The horse with my name had winked its warning at my thirty-year-old game. Even you must appreciate the ironic calling card that spake as the horse hoofed in matrix two-step into the dividing bricks and clay between the Algonquin and Iroquois hotels; was it the call to register in the hotels or happy hunting grounds? I barely had the credit, but I had the card – an hour or so before I'd been using it to grind up another line of grey. I knew the game was up. I caught no breath and wheezed for it anyway, causing the remains of my last piss-attempt to drip uncomfortably down the left-hand side of my inner leg. My left hand dry-cleaned it into the linen fabric and the resultant sting wheezed of a little life.

I'd straddled the game of recent youth-gotten fame with reasonable aplomb in the 70s, armed and charmed mainly – or only – with a line in one hand and Percodan in t'other, no booze for the most part, and just the odd dab of Cadbury's Smack whenever my car overran the yellow Endo lights or slightly shot its brake linings and brain pads.

It was the advent of the compact disc that did me in. In 1987 I'd been called up by Allen Klein to remaster all the early Stones LPs for CD. I just couldn't handle this direct confront with my early masters – the sound was too true. I managed to stay on track and deliver the job, but then cracked through the ice that had protected my blades and dived into a final madness that lasted till the spring of 95. For nigh on twenty years I had been able to handle the game of my fame as third-partied and written up by others. But I came up very short when stuck in the cold museum

of time alone with my original paintings, and threw my carefully controlled, manipulated rotation of excess to the wind and buried my head in the sands of time running out. Now I knew I had to yell, 'Cut!' and knew I could stop . . . because I had to.

The horse gone, its searing reality branded indelibly into the every scared fart of me, I slid my way back through the lobby of the Iroquois and into the elevator without having to eye or be known to another. The lift doors opened on to the orange-urine-grey wading fumes of my possessed ninth Jimmy Dean floor. I flayed through the weight of the madness I'd created, found the key to the door, let myself in, checked myself out in the mirror above the fireplace to make sure it was me and that I was there, saw it was so and collapsed my sack of breathlessness on to the settee, at last able to somewhat breathe.

I thought about help and got dizzy, queasy and short of breath at the mere idea; not at the idea of help itself, but at the exhaustion of attempting to explain the route to now. I got up off the couch and picked up the Yellow Pages, fumbled the move and watched the book fall. As it did I spied again under the front door, and knew from the swish 'n' swill still movement that the animals were baying and crawling back in the hall. The book of Yellow Pages also had habits. It had opened on the floor at the section for escorts and whores. Another of me wondered if I might find my name there. We grimaced at the idea and moved on to the pages that yelled help.

I called Tom Steinberg and asked if he'd mind stopping by. Well, that was the quiet external attempt while the inside screamed *get over here, now*. I was scared to eat without assistance or witness; I was scared of how far this had actually gone even now. I was scared I could choke on over to the other side and leave that disgusting legacy that would savage my family and cause many to gloat in that *schadenfreude* fuel for their survival. I wolfed down a couple of bananas, two small

cartons of milk and a beer under the arrived Tommy's concerned eye. I wore looser clothes these days, and on this one I tried to feel the remaining touch of comfort in a combo of linens and silk – a double-breasted off-the-shoulder silk navy blue jacket, loose linen beige flecked shirt and trousers and raffle-weaved Italian golden-beige loafers – but it wasn't working. The double-breasted was a bloated physical must and the shoes were worn without socks, not in homage to Don Johnson and *Miami Vice* – though I'd done plenty of that – but because on intake of anything, be it food, booze, pills or drugs, I'd balloon up, swell in my middle and my feet, and waddle somewhere on the light side of Orson Welles.

Steinberg had worked for me till a couple of years ago. A lovely, crazed pit-bull worrier, he'd taken the opportunity to straighten up after more than half of a very decade in the employ of first Mick Rock and then yours truly. Our madnesses collided and gave out in the Frank Sinatra suite in the Fontainebleau in Miami when, attempting to get some rest from the Ratones Paranoicos madness, we made the mistake of trying to spend a weekend without coke. During that time I needed Tommy to watch over me while I slept, or better put, when I slept.

I had spent some time in God's Country in the early 90s, up in the mountains in bear country one hundred miles from the nearest phone, misbehaving like a good ol' boy, shooting and tooting and living the finger-lickin' life. I was in Little Rock, bar of the latest Rockefeller, near-home to many a landing strip of Colombian export and launching pad of El Clintoneze. I was there ostensibly to check out a local band that had caught the eye of a good friend, Jefferson Fletcher. His father was a gentleman-farmer heart surgeon, so it seemed the right time to avail myself of my host's hospitality and check myself in to a Little Rock hospital to get to the bottom of my sleep apnea, sometimes known on the legal circuit as narcolepsy. The results had been quite

alarming. I was ceasing to breathe for up to a minute at a time, many times per hour, during what passed for a night's sleep. Alas, I was in the wrong county, wrong climate to be told that had I not been alcoholic, I would not have gained the weight that on my slight frame had caused the apnea. A man could go mad in Hot Springs and Little Rock; I nearly did and got on a plane for Houston and Bogotá in the nick of time on that shoot 'em up-*At Close Range* Christopher Walken puffed daddy gangster loop I'd cast myself into against the young Fletcher's Sean Penn. Life in the 90s had a disturbing factor, not present in the innocent 50s and 60s – I did not make my movies alone in my head any more. Thus I was able to cast real madness into my dangerously living reels and found it wasn't that hard to enlist equally mad players into my shooting schedule.

I still had the weight as I fast-snacked, fast-gulped and upped a wee line of marching powder to settle me down and take my mind off the bulbous Buddha that was me. It banged angrily from the inside to the outside of my stomach walls. And so I dived and delved further into the Yellow Pages for help. I got nowhere as I spoke to quite a few people who sounded worse than me – and they were the zoo keepers. All they really wanted to know was whether I was game to be committed, locked up, analysed, represcribed, and whether I had the insurance to handle any and every event. This fool was looking for insurance from them, but none would give me any data until I'd let them lock me up. I reached out to a multi-addiction establishment in Tucson that the tabloids boasted had enjoyed the company of Michael Douglas and Robert Downey Jr. I was still looking for the kid-glove celebrity handling, but did not feel sufficiently celebriac to place the Betty Ford clinic on my for-whom-the-bell toll call. The Sierra Tucson clinic just wanted to send me forms, brochures and videos. I don't think I could have told the difference between that and a Mario Perrillo & Sons 'come-a-to-Ital-ie' cruise

2STONED

51

commercial. I may have asked the voice from Tucson if they were offering two-fers so that I could take the man in my head along.

Some two weeks before, as you may have gleaned from the preface of *Stoned*, I'd breakfasted on brandy and beer in Connecticut with my good friend Thomas 'Doc' Cavalier. While he ate, I drank and gulped through the silence he gave me as I somewhat settled up a debt from the 70s. Doc recalls my cry as I hugged him and stumbled into the New York-bound limo. The stumble can be blamed in part on the brown lizard-toe-tipped black leather cowboy boots, and the rest billed to me. Atop the boots I wore a double-breasted grey and beige-flecked Prince of Wales checked suit and black-studded cowboy shirt with a turquoise and mother-of-pearl-inlaid 'country' tie thong. Below it all I sweated. I'd played out my Al Pacino in *Godfather III* at the end of an Oslo game, too criminal and abysmal to detour into here; I was now channelling Dennis Hopper in *Blue Velvet* crossed with Michael Caine in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, and it was a very hard role to pull off. My pal Rafi Ameer had given me a video copy of a bald, black-suited, clear-eyed Dennis Hopper lecturing in the Actors Studio series. I viewed Mr Hopper in the limo; he was erudite and handsomely sub-maniac, but of no use as a continuing role for me. He was straight and sober. This recent physical nearness to the all-seeing Doc Cavalier allowed me to crash through that misplaced English-bred pride as a choice against survival. Back in New York not even one day (and barely a night) I knew the horse had me at the end of the final run. I picked up the Hotel Iroquois phone and dialled nine-one-two-oh-three and Doc's number. He came to the phone and in quiet panic I got my thoughts off of the floor and into my brain, down into my mouth and formed seven life-determining words.

'Doc, I'm in trouble. I need help.'

At that slow-moment my body screamed to a halt in silence like the roadrunner on the edge of the cliff. The remains of me

thanked me for confronting the weight and the reality. I was at the beginning of free. Eighteen hours later I was packing my last roustabout into my suitcases. Doc had called back and given me the name and directions for a Fred Ulan, a nutritionist in upstate New York. Drug zombies were not his lot and I'd find out if they were 5 per cent of his practice I was that 5 per cent. I'd called a limo to deliver me unto Fred, lodged twenty minutes north of Saratoga Springs and an hour north of the NY state capital Albany. I didn't ask Doc for other details on Fred. I knew Doc knew, and I just wanted to get on with it.

I made an attempt at an early supper at the kindly Un, Deux, Trois down the block on 44th near Sixth Avenue. I might have managed had the liver been as pureed as the mashed spuds, but as it was I couldn't handle solids for fear of choking amid disorientating panic attacks. I clung on to the edge of the table, rammed my toes so I could feel them in the front of my shoes to trick myself into not disappearing into the smoke I was blowing. You'll understand I was very nervous and in a totally anticipatory state, still in roadrunner mode, looking down and checking my feet, almost whimsical about how close to the cliff's edge I'd come. I played it safe and ordered the soup of the day, a beer and a grappa. I could handle the bread when dunked in the bean soup. I could handle the beans when squashed with a spoon. I could handle it all with one sensible spoon of coke. I knew enough not to attempt more than one task at a time – it was either eat, chew and swallow, or ask the waiter for another glass of water, but not both. My mind and body were inflated, deflated and out of order, and I feared that any shift in concentration might put me in the tabloid land where, it is presumed, Mama Cass ate her world goodbye. I somehow had enough sense of decorum, flushed by ego, to monitor that ghastly potential legacy. My mind rued on how many had lost life in recovery and my body told me, 'Although I applaud your intention, don't be foolish and

2STONED

53

put me in shock as we might not get through it, and we definitely won't if you dare overdo it. Now is not the time, those days are done. I implore you, just maintain me, lull me in that limo upstate and let me grab hold of the rest of a life.' Back at the Iroquois I held a breathless farewell in the reception. The lady manager looked at our worn-out celebratory gathering with concern and care. My comings and goings and altered states had not gone unnoticed by the staff, and they had made a concerted effort to care for me when I was not capable of caring for myself. I had given them cause for alarm when they viewed some of the drug malaise and traffic I had let into my life and on to their property by night, and most of the mornings I'd brown-bagged my way into the day.

The limo ride from the Iroquois was restful, restless and eventful. I found myself taking on Edward G. Robinson's adieu to his body of work and the body itself in *Soylent Green* when encapsulated in the life-recalling casket. As I sat aback of my Cadillac casket humming into the upstate night, my mind and vision wandered over my own playing fields, my stately manors and fall from grace, and that England's green and pleasant I had left or lost so long ago. I moved from the freeway to the motorway and recalled the joy of it all as in the spring of 64 I had sat aback John Lennon's Phantom V on the jump seat sharing a tab of life with John and Paul McCartney on the M6 run back to town after their triumphant return to Liverpool following their first American in-person triumph, the same triumph that shaped our pop music for ever by allowing us an America. We had laughed at life and people and John and Paul had laughed at the enough of it all as they imagined the windows of the Phantom V smashing, sharding and disfiguring their beaming visages to such an extent that the Beatles would have to call it a day and mop up in monkey suits in order to face their world crowd.

I felt a shudder and a fist-size emotional lump in my throat

as I recalled the end of that innocence some thirty-one years down the motorway. I turned my face into the reflection and turnpike swish of the near window as this memory called my name. The camera caught my very thought and Giorgio Moroder scored the unedited take. Next I felt like a fuckin' beautifully sad Farley Granger, a stranger on the train watching it sidetracked and derailed in time – his in the 50s; mine, I suppose, in the 60s. I thought of Mick Jagger and the *Angel Heart* of us both. Fuck 'Memo From Turner'. In my flick I was Harry Angel and Mick was Lisa Bonet. I remembered all the wondering about and feelings spilt in ink, these spent emotions turning out to be the only dialogue between MPJ and me. I smiled at the Louis Cypher, Allen Klein and Keith Richards of it all, wondered if Louis C was a Sag, too, knew it didn't matter, and still couldn't tell the difference.

I remembered the moments that mattered and the moments that I had allowed to hurt. How the 1989 Stones being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame had only had my part in their game whispered as an aside by a knowing Pete Townshend. That had hurt, but I was a victim at the time – and about being hurt. I mused on others' trains and boats and planes and how my finest hours were contained in clothes and planes and limos reflected in my own vinyl screen. One afternoon in 67 in need of another high I called for an E-type Jag. I got my high by being too busy to traipse or troll from New Oxford Street to Berkeley Square to pick one out; I had the showroom drive every colour round, which I viewed from my Immediate window and after one, two, due consideration, like the petulant overwrought fake child I'd become, I stuck my finger towards the fire-engine red Jag and pouted, 'I'll have that one.' I recalled a Michael Caine book and video *Acting in Film*, which I'd absorbed with the same panic I'd absorbed David Mamet's *On Directing Film* because I by now needed tools in this merciless task of directing myself. Although

2STONED

55

Mr Caine's book 'n' video had some useful hints about listening that I was not able to take in at the time, they also caused me trauma via his statement that fame was a better friend when it came late in life and how its early arrival was hard to survive. This very thought gave me a lot of worry but at the same time an edge of insane resolve to prove him wrong. I longed for the Zen and threads of Laurence Harvey. I didn't have the texture – both in what I wore and the within from whence I wore it.

The angel of getting all you wished for had ripped apart my heart and now I could only pathetically mime to 'I Who Had Nothing'. Cocaine has a song-resonance all of its own, a nasal echo chamber that has one sounding quite good to oneself, although I'm sure to my driver I sounded more like a throttled parrot. I had the foundations and support but had to claim myself back before I could return and be at one with wife, son and home. I had called Esther from New York the night of the translucent hoofed warning. I'd told her I was not coming home, did not know where I was going but would call her when I got there. I remembered the call, her bewilderment glued to trust, the resolve of her joined-to-my-hip sigh. I looked into the camera that tracked the limo shot, allowed myself a heave of bereft gratitude to that lady of grace – my advantage. My midnight express changed highways north of Albany and I woke up and thought it all looked like train crossings in and out of Stuttgart. It got a little hairy when my driver overshot our exit. I cursed him, Faye Dunaway-regaled him, had him stop at a 7-11 for a six-pack, and while he fetched it I calmed myself down with a toot and a hit from the hip flask.

We finally then entered the hallowed land of Dorothy Malone and all things *Peyton Place* as the limo crawled into the town square of Glens Falls. I looked at the white-picketed bandstand, the library, the green, shook hands in my mind and took hope. I felt this patch of earth would become familiar, well-worn turf in

my life and recovery and I wanted to make friends with this hope. Over the next few days I would see the ghosts of Barbara Perkins and Ryan O'Neal falling in and out of love reflecting that black, white and clear world of *Peyton Place*, its time and the simplicity lost to my complex world of expressed mood elevation, liquid diet and a triturate mind.

The Queensbury Hotel dominated the surrounding green. We parked in the forecourt and I strode shakily in. The reception and lobby were quite magnificent and three storeys tall. I whimsically looked up the walls imagining horses; the painting over the fireplace displayed hounds. I paid off the limo driver, sort of apologised again with a tip, checked into my room, left my bags at the door and collapsed on to the bed and started the wait. I can still get pale and mouth-watered at the thought of how absolutely weak I felt in that moment. I had an appointment with Fred Ulan at the Natural Health Improvement Center at 2 p.m. the next day. I lay still and hoped I'd not checked into the Overlook Inn. I was already in my own version of *The Shining* and wanted desperately to check out. I could only look at the ceiling and begin one of the longest nights of my life.

I'd ordered a dinner of fish, rice, mixed veg, three iced teas, a couple of fruit salads, two milks and a couple of glasses of white wine. I wolfed down the main grub, played with the house salad and looked at the wine. It didn't look inviting; it looked like aged syrup that had turned. I leaned over and had a sip. The sip was like time travelling back into the poison which rushed in my very veins. At that point I had a short line to kill the poison and at the same time said goodbye to the wine. That tippie of fate had me once more exhausted and I re-collapsed on the bed and resumed the wait. I wondered what the Natural Health Improvement Center would be like and, based on the already-sighted brick, green and trees, imagined a Hampstead Flask Walk, leaf-covered, one-up two-down town house, the air of briar pipes,

2STONED

57

shrinks in suede-patch tweed jackets, pseudo-stomach Jews dressed up in mauve socialist hues, mutton dressed as ham, hush puppies, lots of silent torturous moments as one looked for the real we as the crow and fifty minutes fly.

I'd be wrong on all accounts. I thought of ringing Doc but decided not to show fear and bad faith 'n' taste. I was in the understandable midst of wishful thinking and *delirium tremens*, knew it, and might as well get on with it. I channel-boogied my way through to a 1.30 a.m. ex-70s ABC TV Movie Of The Week with Stuart Whitman as a Malibu-based, driven private dick. When Dorothy Malone made a guest appearance on the terrace, I breathed a sigh for Mother and gauze and managed to get an hour of kip and a little peace as Mr Whitman displayed that Rockford/Malibu Percodan gait of pain when pursuing the baddies – a specific run brought about by too many blows to the body. I had empathy – my stunts had been limited to blows to the head. I got through the night in fits and bursts, finally getting my best sleep shortly after *Good Morning America* greeted us into the day. Around eleven I breakfasted and managed to shower. From then until one remains a daze as the wallpaper tried to remind me of a sepia Victorian homage to the cover of *Satanic Majesties*. In other words, the walls were still moving. I thought about walking, did so to the lobby, thought better of continuing, and ordered a cab.

Five minutes later I was in the reception of 15 West Notre Dame Street and filling out a form on the drug history of my life. I'd been wrong about the set and location. There were a lot of leaves but they were on the trees. My house on Carroll Street was austere, grey-stoned and bare of façade. I remember feeling quite put out that I managed to get all of my decline and fall on to three pages. Nonetheless, I wrote up the cocaine, the alcohol, the heroin, the mood elevators as in Zolof and Ritalin-tin-tin. I segued into the tranquillisers, Valium and Librium on down to

the sleepers; the Halcyon into the morphine-driven and derivated Percodan, Percocet, Vicodan, Dilaudid and DF 118s; the pot and the hash; the opium and the recall of all the brand names whose names I dare to forget. Endo was my Cartier and triple script be thy name. I wrote up the numbers, the volume, the curse. I recalled the also-rans, the low end of the volume totem pole – the LSD, the mushrooms and the STP. I didn't write up the asking of how I would survive being straight, or whether I *could* survive being straight.

I didn't write up the question of whether I would ever have another brilliant commercial idea. I'd later find I could embrace a good idea more than once every day as I followed a regimen of eating, sleeping and a discipline of good health. I discerned between the idea and its being commercial and allowed it to remain in and of itself – in the future I'd let it determine its own commerce, volume and art. As I lay in the trough of madness I mentioned quietly to myself that I hadn't had one idea that could fly. I could count the non-starters oozing out of every pore. Every germ of an idea remained a germ as I reached the depth of a mocking survival . . . a cardinal sin to be recognised as part of the long goodbye.

Nary an idea to cling to, not a murmur of mañana worth jump-starting into gear. If I'd had one bright thought I certainly did not have the wherewithal to bring it into being. None of this I wrote on the page; I just shaved the grazes and scabs from my skin and pulled them into mind and vision and wished the jaded game away. The death thread I'd spent years weaving no longer had any meaning, support or hope – it had become a sarco-transporter as weary, worn and brittle as sackcloth. I suddenly had the wherewithal to expunge the saphrophyte member I had let fester and breed inside me – the enemy that has to turn on you, the enemy you called friend. Somehow through all this shudder-letting I had the beginning of my grasp at survival. I'd

purposefully confused an attraction for talent with a physical attraction. I had recently watched this ghost attempt to re-enter the garden of discontent and offer up another paradise in hell. I scratched the band and frequency as I recalled the lithe frets and the bass notes of that summer of 72 Connecticut occasion and moved my mind down to another bass-filled occasion when twenty years later Tony Calder had received a call from me saying, 'Why don't we form Immediate III?' That was another fool-on-the-hill proposal that begot a well-timed and well-received book 'n' bow on Abba but a mute run at a musical hurrah with Tony taking advantage of only that which my condition allowed.

We'd sat down in London with Bill Wyman and in Santa Monica with Brian Wilson but even these two would not let us drive their car, and quite rightly. Immediate III ended in the spring of 95 and I nearly joined it as I made three false starts for London Airport not sure if I was loaded enough to go. How could the lost fail to moth to the light of a book that offers you the chance to live your life again? But it couldn't, not if you were about the business of dying. I wrote up the cycles like a mathematical graph depicting the rotation and the out-of-control time. I studied my face in the mirror and saw the dead clay mounds of flesh that passed for life around my eyes and nose; I looked at my eyes and their vision was even grimmer. There was no light, no sign of life. Only I knew that there was somebody at home. I wrote up the apnea. I wrote of the cessation of breathing, the fear and the sweats in the night. I wrote up the pains on the insides of my forearms that I'd kept quiet about out of fear and because they yelled stroke. I pulled for some breath and continued to write, moving on to the pain in my chest, burning liver, the cramping in my temples, left leg and foot, left hand and small of my back. I wrote up my oft inability to walk without charting the every single left-right-left of my left and right feet. I wrote up,

or confronted – because that was what this was coming down to, this cleansing straight to the page. I wrote of my nigh-on inability to stand focused in the shower and how I had to look down with my eyes very carefully and slowly to make sure of and believe I had feet. This means my motor had broken down and there was no registration of circulation being transmitted to my brain from either foot. I had spent an inordinate amount of bathing time avoiding injuring myself. What was between was Death Valley, and that's where I lived and got high.

I wrote up my *sinus delecti*, the holes so deep in their valley that I often whistled while I talked. I wrote of how I could not walk for any distance without pain, spasms and exhaustion, and of my now total inability to work. I wrote up my dripping dickette, the shot circulation, the inability to control my bodily functions, my affinity with the June Allyson commercials and how when I held my dick in my hand I held a withered widow, immune to any touch, way past sailing with cocaine on its masthead – definitely more dead, less wed, than alive. This was true of the rest of me, for of late it was as if I wore a mask like the phantom, and on the occasion the collision of drugs found some life in me, it didn't go deeper than the mask. There had been no deep relief, no reason to propel this addiction as I finally daily, hourly, every ten minutes searched in vein, literally and with shame, for the bejesus relief of that Madonna – that very first high.

I wrote of my life's co-star, that dame called depression, who pulled every good moment into distress and disarray. I wrote up the 1967 to 1970 electric-shock treatments – the electric-convulsant therapy to which I had submitted myself in an effort to remove the pain and memory and trauma of what I perceived as my dregs of a personal life. I wrote how my good doctor had injected me in order to get me to speak the truth. And how I used to fake breakdowns to get to the doctors, to get jabbed again into telling the truth. How I was there for the high of counting

2STONED

61

backwards from ten and nodding out. To get to this high I put up with the rubber shoved inside my mouth to stop me from biting or swallowing my tongue. I put up with the zombie I felt like when awoken; I degraded myself and invited all this to quell the perception of pain, dark and hurt.

The last question I had to answer was to explain what had brought me here. I stated that I did not know whether I would live or die but had decided that I wanted to live.

Fred Ulan read my chart and writings and surveyed the tattered Susan Hayward doll before him as I brushed imagined bangs from my brow. He sighed; I raised my eyes in agreement. He put down my writings and started to muscle-test me. From that moment on we never actually, save where it was medically appropriate for the required data, spent or wasted any time discussing booze, depression, the lust for self-medication or drugs and my experience in all. I had made the decision to stop all and now we were about a nutritional programme to assist me in that, repair the damage and have me grow back into being. The muscle-testing located the volume of deficiency and located the main ingredients of danger: my adrenal glands and heart. I started taking nutritional supplements for all those near-destroyed and depleted parts. I swallowed hard at the idea of how bad I had got, and how close to the final ride. I mouthed a thank-you for that fifteen-storey intervention, tried to swallow but could not locate my tongue. My throat was so confused and swollen I could not tell the difference between it and my tongue. I held the chair to hold the panic, felt the body parts discern and explain themselves to me. I breathed and then I laughed. That night it felt as if the whole town was quiet for me, breathed for me and lulled me through the dark.

