

THE LIFE & LINES OF BRANDON BLOCK

by MATT TROLLOPE



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Excerpts from...

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Lines of
Brandon
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by

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Hi, I'm Brandon Block, and this is my story...

...well, what I can remember so far, at least. Every time I read through this book the more of my crazy adventures come to mind, but we have had to draw the 'line' somewhere, at least for this volume anyway.

It's taken quite some time and the patience of a saint. In fact, Matt Trollope is Roger Moore and Val Kilmer rolled into one!

Now it's finally here, though - my labour of love, and hopefully a little insight into what has been an extremely enjoyable, albeit occasionally dangerous journey.

Fortunately I made it through, via the odd near death experience, loads of adversity and despite tonnes of 'wallop'.

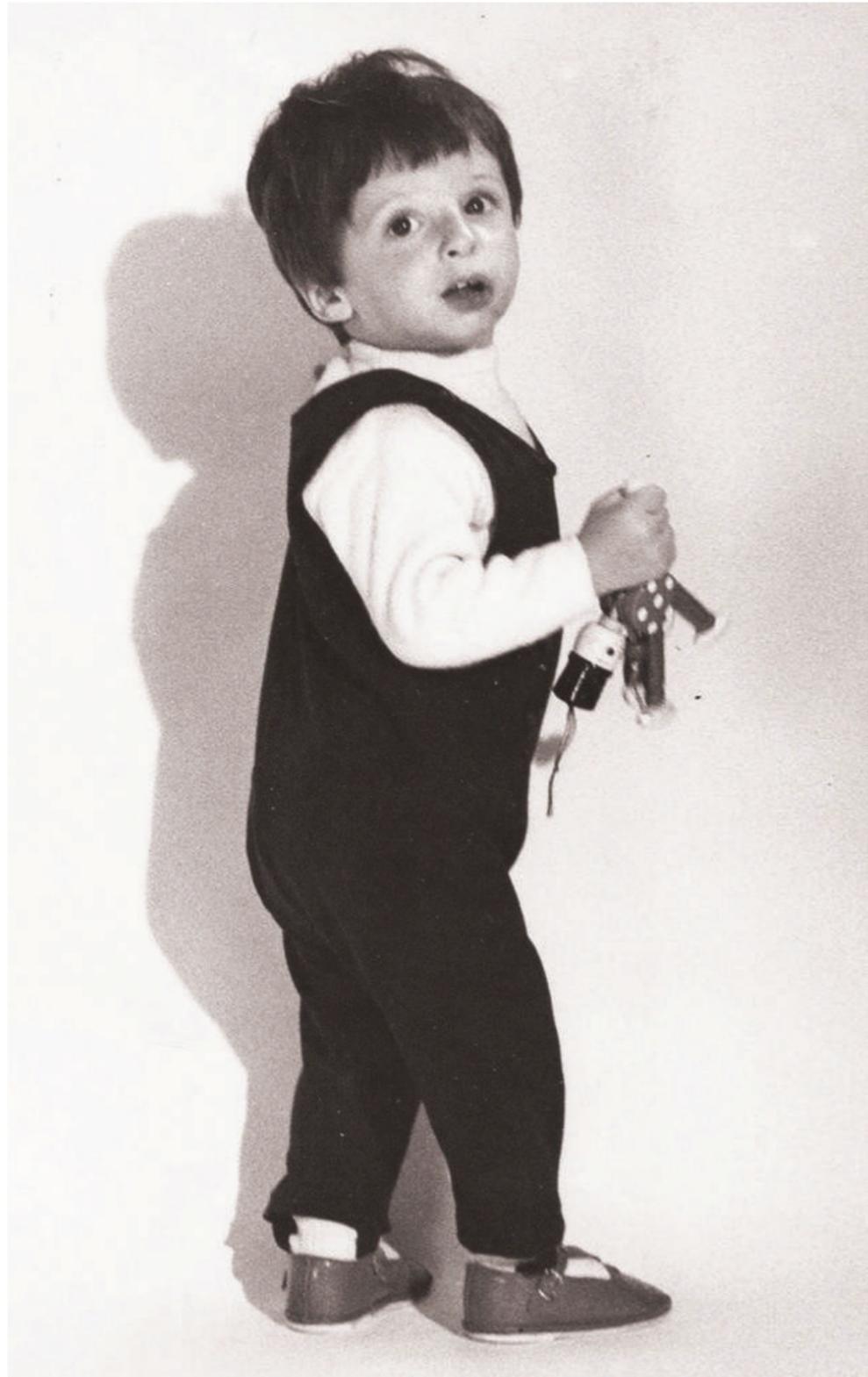
With any luck, some of you out there can even take heed and realise that there is always a way back.

It's been emotional...very!

I dedicate this book to my mum Viv, my dad Harvey, daughter Lily, sister Emma, Aunt Arlene and Uncle Clifford, cousins Adam and Elliott and grandparents Goldie Sklar and Joe Block. Thank you for being the best family anyone could ask for and for all your unwavering support throughout my life. You all deserve medals!

And thanks to Dr William Shanahan for showing me the way back.

Blocko x



Matt Trollope

Growing Up

Like any regular kid of the late 1970s and early '80s, I progressed effortlessly from Raleigh Chopper to Raleigh Grifter, via skateboard, but mostly roller-skates, culminating in the formation of the dubiously-titled South Kenton Skate Patrol.

Still in touch today with many of the friends I made at Byron Court Primary School, a whole gang of us later moved on to Wembley High School in East Lane. One of few Jews at 'big' school, I quickly tapped into some 'older kid' contacts, and was promptly encouraged to bunk off on my first day with a second year called Phil Ember.

The skate patrol was later followed by the effervescent and all-singing, all-dancing South Kenton Soul Patrol. In fact, at this point in our lives we were highly affiliated with many so-called local action groups. Others included the South Kenton Thunderbird Patrol, named not after the successful TV series, but the popular and affordable street tippie of the day.

Phil took me into the West End on my first day at secondary school, and when we were milling around he pointed to a shop and asked me to get him 20 Lambert & Butler. Next thing I knew I was in Ann Summers on Tottenham Court Road - this little runt in a blazer, being chased in and out of the dildos by the staff. And this was when these shops weren't as

acceptable as they are now. Needless to say, I was quickly and unceremoniously escorted from the premises. It was my first experience of the West End, and little did I know, there were many more good vibrations to come!

To be honest, going to secondary school was actually quite a harrowing experience. I was easily influenced and because I was hanging around with older kids, people like Baggy Baxter, John Arts and Bowlsy, I was always going to get led astray.

At the start, though, I was the Jewish kid with the briefcase and I got picked on loads. And because I was Jewish, I got it from all the skinheads. It was a kids' thing, they were just going with the fashion at the time. Unfortunately, the fashion at the time was to flush the head (and briefcase) of any unsuspecting Yiddo down the toilet at any given moment.

It doesn't sound or seem that serious now, and it was only for the first few months, but at the time it was very unpleasant, like any form of bullying, I suppose. Fortunately at Wembley High the skinhead movement at that time soon passed, everybody got into funk and soul and things were much more about the music from then on.

I was quickly into my mischief-making stride, and I can remember my first cigarette vividly. I could only have been about 13 and I did try and resist for a year or so. Then one night I had a fag and promptly coughed my guts up. The next morning I bought a pack of 10 Lambert & Butler, which I think was the first brand to start doing 10s in those days. And strangely, my asthma seemed to disappear at that point.

I was a tearaway, but I wasn't violent, just very, very naughty. Not like now. Kids these days have slightly more devious agendas. Back then the teachers hit us, now it's the other way round. I didn't play truant that often at Wembley High because I was too busy having fun. In fact, I took not concentrating to another level, and was asked to stand outside the class a hell of a lot, which I enjoyed because it gave me time to conjure up the plot to my next fun-packed lesson. And I always felt that I found the lessons much more rewarding than any of the teachers did.

Around that time, I hosted the one and only house party most teenagers got away with...like those in the classic '80s Yellow Pages advert and cult British movies Party Party and Quadrophenia all rolled into one. It was carnage. My mum came home and people had climbed over the neighbours' gardens and were causing mayhem. There were empty cans of beer and Watney's Party 7s everywhere and everyone was hammered. What a mess!

The Acid Test

A world away from the heady heights of recruitment, in August 1987, Nicky Holloway, Paul Oakenfold, Danny Rampling, Trevor Fung and Johnnie Walker famously embarked on their infamous trip to Ibiza, stumbling across Alfredo's pioneering sessions at Amnesia and sampling the drug ecstasy for the first time. Inspired by the heady mix of Balearic tunes, acid house and ecstasy, the group returned and set about trying to recreate that magic in the capital. Within weeks London's clubland was literally buzzing.

In November of that year Rampling launched Shoom (at The Fitness Centre in Southwark), and in the same month Oakenfold held Future parties in the back room of Heaven in Charing Cross Road. Soon after in January 1988, Oakenfold started The Project Club in Streatham to cater for his London-based Ibiza following.

In February the first Hedonism illegal warehouse party was held in the Hanger Lane area. Oakey went on to open Spectrum at Heaven in April of that year, on a Monday night too, and Holloway launched The Trip at The Astoria in Shaftesbury Avenue at the end of May on an initial 12-week run, returning later that year to continue as Sin.

The same year public school-educated Tony Colston-Hayter, reportedly reacting to an increasingly

more exclusive door policy at Shoom, put on his own rave events at Wembley Studios called Apocalypse Now.

I remember around this time, when people had started doing pills, and I hadn't yet partaken, Paul Avery had a flat in Preston Road, north Wembley with six bedrooms. His grandparents had moved out and left him to rule the roost, which he did with the help of Baggy, Larry, Rocket, Stiggers, and whoever else needed a room for the night.

However, it put years on Aves. He was in this one armchair all day, in his dressing gown, endlessly puffing. He had his long curly hair, and you'd go around there and say "all right Aves?", and he'd just raise his eyebrows and nod, in a haze of smoke. He'd turned into Rigsby overnight. I remember him and Baggy cooked us magic mushrooms for Christmas dinner that year, in a unique take on quirky late night food recycling TV show Get Stuffed.

But before that, one historic night the boys went to this illegal acid house do at Staples Corner, near Brent Cross. They all took ecstasy that night while I stayed back at Paul's expansive flat, drinking. They all said they were going to this warehouse party, and I said "no, I don't think that's for me, no, fuck that, I'll stay here". That's how anti-drugs I was at the time.

When my mates returned later with jibbering jaws they kept talking about "the bells, the bells". I later discovered this was the infamous acid house anthem Dance With The Devil by Paul Oakenfold as The Project Club, with the bells chiming throughout and because they'd been doing Es they just couldn't get it out of their heads.

The very next evening I finally succumbed at a house party in Frognall Road, Harrow... Phil Baxter (Baggy's older brother) and Debbie Mania's place (a couple soon to be married at Wembley Conference Centre, with me and Ali DJing, and playing Todd Terry's Can You Feel It as their first dance at what must surely have been the first acid house wedding).

It was at this fateful (although, I could also use the words "absolutely wonderful") party in Harrow that I shared my first ecstasy tablet with my good friend Matthew Donegan. It was funny, a few years earlier we had all shared this love of funk music, but before the acid house thing hit, some of the cooler London lot, who now included Matty D, didn't want to be seen with our pub crew.

Then acid house took over the world, and suddenly it didn't matter because everybody was at it, the rule book was thrown out. Matt had said "come to this party with me, and try one of these", and before long we were inseparable again! I just thought "fuck it, let's see what this is all about". I took half a pill, a little yellow burger, I think it was, and ended up dancing on the garden shed roof until 4pm the next afternoon...on my own! Everyone else had gone home.

I was going to these parties and hearing all this acid music, stuff made on the 303, and thought "bang on". However, it seems mad looking back now that initially I had been anti-drugs and although my mates were doing pills at those parties, I had refused to try it.

Now I couldn't get enough of this and the night after Phil and Debbie's party, with no sleep, I was out again, searching for the music and, of course, this

amazing feeling from ecstasy. I didn't have to look far and a party everyone was talking about was in a house, on the Chalkhill estate (R.I.P). There was a queue going up the stairs to Bowlsy, who was in one of the bedrooms with the pills. He'd literally just arrived and had been herded to the top of the stairs so the madding crowd below could form a not so orderly queue. I was straight in again, pushed my way to the front and necked one whole.

That was it, that next week, after I'd done my first Es, I went straight to The Record & Disco Centre in Rayner's Lane and bought a whole new acid house record collection. The 'R&D', as we called it, was situated in the basement of a video rental shop, owned by Jon Jules, who at the time, and to this day, was and is my mentor as a DJ. I worked at the shop at one point, along with Dean Thatcher and Simon Dunmore, who in the late '90s went on to become head of the UK's leading dance label Defected Records.

Jon Jules has a remarkable memory for dates and reflects.

I used to go down to Crackers on a Friday, bunk off school, and then go to the 100 Club on a Saturday, between midday and 3pm, because, although we were underage we could get in there on a Saturday afternoon.

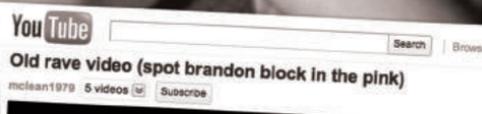
Brandon used to go there too, as did a lot of the Wembley lot. We all used to listen to the same pirate radio stations too. Then I started going to clubs like The Royalty in Southgate and The Goldmine, where DJs like Froggy, Tom Holland, Chris Brown and a very young Pete Tong used to play.

On March 30, 1988, I bought The R & D from Andy

Mann. They were crazy times. Working there mid-week was me, Simon Dunmore, Glenn Gunner and a guy called Jerry Green. Then on a Saturday there would be Brandon, Darren Rock (aka Rocky), Ian Baker, who was in Jesus Jones and guy called Wayne. Charlie Chester, who was a cabbie then, was in there all the time too.

Paul Oakenfold was working in A & R at Champion Records. He was always in the shop, as was James Hamilton from Record Mirror, who we did a chart for. Between late 1987 and 1990 it was madness. We were hyping loads of people's records, getting boxes of promos from the various labels and making sure they got to the right people. Those three years are a bit of a blur, actually. On a Friday night we'd all go down to Oakey's night Ziggy in Streatham and hang out there, and most of the staff started DJing out.

Brandon worked at The R & D on a Saturday there between '87 and '89, and even if he didn't come in for the whole day, he'd come in for a couple of hours, and I'd pay him in records most of the time. I used to go and hear him DJ down at The John Lyon playing funk and disco, and then I'd got a gig as resident at Zig Zag at Broadway Boulevard for Alan Warman and Carl Pearson, and Brandon would be badgering them for a house set and I used to say "let him play, he'll be good".



Hey DJ!

Somehow I had become a fully-fledged DJ and it was beginning to look like I wouldn't be confined to the four walls of an office for quite some time.

As 1990 unfolded, Flying was now cementing a new Saturday reputation at Soho Theatre Club, just along from The Astoria, in London's West End.

I was more and more in demand elsewhere, though, with Fridays and Saturdays starting to get booked out well in advance, and Haven Stables all-day on a Sunday providing reliable work towards the end of the weekend.

Flying was continuing to build throughout England and beyond. The rolling out of the brand throughout the UK, linking up with the best club nights and DJs from each main city, was built on the same philosophy as Flying's new central London base, which ensured that the cream of the UK's house jocks guested each week in the capital alongside Thatcher and myself, when I was asked.

Regular Friday work included The Brain in War-dour Street with the likes of Judge Jules, and on Saturdays The Menace at Starlights in Paddington, with Fabi Paras and Steve Proctor.

Even Thursdays were busy, with bookings at the dubiously-titled Shagaramas at The Reflex Club in Putney, where one week I would be on with Weather-all, and another, with Ibiza out of season, you could

find Amnesia legend Alfredo alongside Steve Savva.

Another new and important addition and house music option for London's West End had been orchestrated by Nicky Holloway, who, with Sin still thriving at The Astoria, in April of 1990, opened his own much smaller and more intimate venue across the road on Sutton Row. The Milk Bar had a capacity of just 200, and quickly became one of THE places to hear house music in London and would go on to provide me with another Sunday home.

But before that, the spring of 1990 would give me my first taste of an island, which in turn provided a platform to take my DJ career to so many more levels.

I had heard all the stories about Ibiza and witnessed first hand how its influence had transformed clubbing in London, but now it was time to check it out for myself.

What a gaff, though? First time to Ibiza and as soon as I stepped off the plane, at what was then a tiny airport, at the back end of nowhere, the feeling came over me and it has never changed to this day, drugs or no drugs.

I vaguely remember 'monkey-walking' through Pacha on the A-frame that used to stretch the length of the dancefloor, kicking people in the head as I swung. I know they were all pilled up but I bet they loved me, eh? Although, I didn't 'hang' around to find out!

My bookings diary was healthy, and in the summer of 1990 I was asked to play at a new party called Gosh, co-promoted by Rocky and Clive Henry.

The first in July featured usual suspects Dean Thatcher, Phil Perry, Glen Gunner, Fabi Paras, Scott

Braithwaite, Clive and myself, with the next one in August at Dingwalls in Camden headlined by DeeeL-ite from New York (live), and I was joined by Weatherall, Thatcher and Bob Jones.

In October 1990, Phil Perry, who by now had finished his Sunday session at Queen's, after one too many complaints by boating people in the area, launched his new and soon-to-be legendary project, Full Circle.

Around that time my ecstasy intake was huge, often consuming pills by the dozen over a 24-hour period. And so much wallop too, now my official name for it. By this time I was never without at least an eighth of an ounce on me, so around three or four grams.

One day I saw the film *Tango & Cash*, and they used the phrase FUBAR... "he's FUBAR man"... which famously stands for 'Fucked Up Beyond All Recognition'. It just described me perfectly. At my insistence we quickly adopted the name for our group. We travelled countrywide as a group to our gigs, which myself and Lisa were getting booked for more and more, and even had T-shirts with Terry Fuckwit from *Viz* magazine printed on the front. Later *Viz* introduced a cartoon strip called Ravey, Davey, Gravey, with the tagline "he's like Brandon Block on acid...on acid"...which, of course, I often was.

Milking It

With my 25th birthday approaching in March, Nicky Holloway suggested we throw a party at The Milk Bar. We did it on a Sunday (March 10) to fit around our Friday and Saturday night bookings, and everyone came down after Full Circle.

They got me a stripper and it was hilarious. They put me on the stage there, but I'd got all my clothes off before she had. She took one look at me and ran out the club, and up the road in her bra and knickers, with me chasing after her in the nod. Priceless!

And it was an amazing party too, so much so that Nicky suggested we do something regularly. So on Sunday March 31, 1992, FUBAR at The Milk Bar was born, and ran there every Sunday for two years.

Myself and Lisa Loud were residents, and James Mac, Lisa's brother, and Danny Keith were alternate warm-up DJs, plus some other hand-picked guests like Dave Dorrell and Alex P played too.

Lisa Loud picks up the story.

FUBAR was all Brandon's idea, a brilliant idea and the best name in the world for a club. Fantastic. Amazingly, among our little group we had basically decided that over the last few years, after being out on a Monday at Spectrum, Tuesday at Loud Noise, Wednesday at Future, warehouse parties on a Friday,

Raw or wherever on a Saturday, and Sunday daytime at Full Circle, that we still needed to do a Sunday evening party. Bonkers.

I was working for a major record company, and you couldn't really get more high profile than that back then. All the record executives and people from the media would be trying to get in, journalists from ID, MixMag, DJ Mag, MixMag Update, the lot. There would be 500 people queuing down the road, unable to get in to a club that held 200, loads of people who wanted to go to The Astoria, also queuing for FUBAR by mistake because our queue was so big and, with everything going on, there was police everywhere. Total carnage. Come the end of the week Baggy was constantly walking around looking like a window cleaner in a pair of dungarees, with one side of his face unshaven, one of his trouser legs rolled up, and looking like he needed his roots done. Baggy would be sitting outside The Milk Bar with all the tramps and then there was Blocko, the star of the show, who would eventually turn up and often fall asleep under the decks. All the promo we'd done all week and he'd be asleep under the bloody decks. After the club it was always 'all back to mine' and Brandon had had his kip so he was ready to go again.

Looking back, I always thought then, and still do now, that FUBAR was the best club in London at that time, but then I am biased.

Wherever I had played out that weekend I'd make sure I'd get back to London by Sunday night for FUBAR...it ended at midnight, but that was just the start for us, and I'd keep partying until at least Tuesday and sometimes Wednesday, by which time the weekend was almost about to start again.

We used to play some wicked records down at FUBAR, though, some great funk tunes like Tina Marie's I Need Your Loving... loads of stuff that we couldn't play in the house clubs at the weekend and, of course, our sing-along anthem, the 14-minute mix of Rapper's Delight, which, from under the decks, was often like an alarm call to me - you know - "a hip hop, a hippie, a hippie, to the hip-hop, you don't stop", etc, etc.

Sometimes when FUBAR had finished we'd go to Fish on Oxford Street, with our records, and try and see if they'd let us play some more. I'd be saying "c'mon, let's get round to Fish and play Rapper's Delight again, do it from the start, the whole way through". Silly arse!

We'd end up in all parts of London, south, north, west, east...all over, lapping up what our wonderful capital had to offer clubland at this very early stage in the proceedings.



THE MILK BAD BAR

F U B A R Membership Application Form

Name:

ELIZABETH I



GOOD QUEEN ELISABESS
INVITES LADY Karon Dunn
TO CELEBRATE HER 21ST BIRTHD.
HE GROUNDS OF HER COUNTRY B

HATFIELD HOUSE,

IN THE COMPANY OF

ING DONEGAN "GIVE US AN VIII" H
MERRY MANDY QUEEN OF SCOTS
R FRANCIS, "THE PILLAGING KING"

MUS'IC PROVIDED BY- JOHN & MICKY,
GOOD CLEAN MEN OF THE CLERGY,
S BLOCK THE JOVIAL JESTER & DASHING DUN
ASHLEY OF BUBONIC BLACK PLAGUE MARK
FRIAR FARLEY & SIR BABINGTON BREEZ

SATURDAY AUGUST 31ST
5PM - 2AM

FEASTING AT 7PM

ANYONE ARRIVING AFTER 10PM WILL BE BE

non-memb



FLYING AT VENTURE

Stanford Street Nottin

Friday 27th September

DJ'S

DANNY RAMPLIN
DEAN THATCHER
PHIL PERRY
ROCKY & DIESEL
SCOTT BRAITHWA
BRANDON BLOC

Tickets: £6.00

Space Cadets

On my next visit to Ibiza at the start of the summer in 1991 I was determined to make my mark. As usual, there was no shortage of drama.

With faithful friend Baggy Baxter in tow (my very own Bez!), I arrived on the Balearic clubbing island with the next two or three months my oyster.

We didn't know how long we would be there, but we knew we wanted to stay as long as possible. We had a bag of clothes each, £500 in cash and we turned up with five boxes of my records and headed straight for San Antonio.

We found an apartment nearby and took our bags up to the room. I immediately got chatting to this geezer across the balcony, and he said to me "you're Brandon Block, you know my mate Alex P". This guy, Matt Jahal, went on to explain that Alex had heard I was on the island and wanted to see me. That night we met up with a few friends we knew, Nicky Holloway and Del and Kate, who were running Nicky's San An branch of The Milk Bar, and, as you do in Ibiza on your first night, ended up getting smashed out of our brains.

The next afternoon, as me and Baggy were nursing our first of many Ibiza hangovers, suddenly there was this loud banging on the door of our apartment. Someone was screaming "open the door you

wankers, open the fucking door". Standing there was Alex P...paralytic, shouting things at me like "I've shagged your mum, I've shagged your mum's mate, your mum's mate stinks", making absolutely no sense at all, and then he left. It was both hilarious and bizarre.

We later found out that Alex had come out of Pacha that morning and had 'borrowed' a bus.

However, this was no ordinary bus, it was a commuter bus, full of passengers, and Alex had then proceeded to drive it from Pacha to San Antonio, which is a good 20 minutes in anyone's book.

The bus driver had stopped for a sly toilet break outside Pacha and Alex in need of transport to San Antonio decided to see if his PSV licence was Euro-friendly. You can picture the scene as the people of Ibiza going about their normal business on the bus were suddenly whisked off by someone resembling a Greek God, missing every stop and finally coming to an abrupt halt in a bus garage in San An.

We saw Alex the next day down at Cafe Del Mar and he was black and blue, after being nicked by La Guardia and slapped around a bit. That was it, though, with nobody injured, apart from Alex, amazingly they had let him go.

So nothing like a nice calming influence to ease us into his new Ibiza adventure...and Alex P was nothing like a nice calming influence! But what he did have was the keys to the soon-to-be legendary Space terrace, and that first meeting and the commotion I had witnessed at Haven Stables was still fresh in Alex's mind.

Alex explained how he had built and opened the terrace at Space at the end of the season before, with his pal Jimmy 'The Switch' Mitchell, and wanted

me to come down that Sunday and play with him. The actual main inside bit of the club opened at 6am and the terrace opened at 10am.

Before Alex built the bar outside, the terrace was used as a cloakroom and people would chill out there from the huge main room. The year before, Alex had approached the owners with his idea for DJs to play on the terrace. They agreed, but there was no DJ booth as such, the decks were behind the new bar they had built there. Me and Baggy got there that Sunday, with my five record boxes, and it was packed. And that was it, the gates to heaven and hell opened at the same time! I played my set and Alex said "great, I want you to do it every week", and I did, pretty much, for the next five summers, and for several of those seasons, three or four times a week. It was literally the best place in the world to DJ.

It became THE place for all the Brits to go, long before there were UK promoters at any of the other clubs, and eight years before DC10. It was the place the DJs went to unwind, where they went on their day off.

Musically, myself and Alex became known for dropping tunes that you just would not expect to hear during a standard house set, in true Balearic spirit, and just like Alfredo had been doing during the late '80s at Amnesia, when he wowed Messrs Oakenfold, Holloway, Rampling, Fung and Walker.

I remember playing Phil Collins' In The Air Tonight one Sunday afternoon to dramatic effect...cue everybody air-drumming to the famous middle section. The trick, though, was not playing too many tracks like that back in Blighty, because few of them worked as well on a winter's night in the West End.

They were brilliant times. We used to play all sorts

- Depeche Mode's Just Can't Get Enough (live mix), Chris Rea's Josephine, Dire Straits' Money For Nothing, New Order's Blue Monday, Tears For Fears' Shout, Magnificent Seven by The Clash and Rolling Stones' Sympathy For The Devil.

It's strange because before acid house came along, if you went to a decent nightclub or a so-called discotheque you expected to hear disco and funk and a fair amount of pop music, but now house had taken over, and the fact that you could drop Jesus On The Payroll by The Thrashing Doves or some of the Belgium stuff like Code 61's surreal Drop The Deal track, opened up so many things again. Those tracks wouldn't be out of place now and all came under the acid house umbrella, as such.

I remember one time, towards the end of my set on the Space terrace, getting so carried away, because it was going off in there so much that, one by one, I started throwing my records into the crowd. At the end everyone was shouting "one more, one more" but I didn't have any records left. It wasn't until a couple of people gave some back to me, that I was able to put another tune on.

Caning It

Back home from another Ibiza summer, my DJ schedule was so relentless I could be playing out six times a week across three or four nights. My days off should, and would, have been a perfect time to wind down and vitally be cocaine-free. But not me! Somehow I managed to bring that Ibiza snorting form back with me and also managed to fund it too.

Not every day, but some days ten grams, so most afternoons, into the evening and through the night. Every morning, a line when I surfaced to get me going. Hedonistic when you're in Ibiza and you've got up at four in the afternoon, worrying when it's a rainy November morning in Wembley.

The backdrop to all this was still my mum's house in Sudbury. That small box room, always filled with records and designer clothes, and more recently covered with flyers, was now full of bulging ashtrays and strewn with empty coke wraps.

I never really had any money. I'd earn it and spend it on gear. But the more I earned the more gear I seemed to get through. Soon there simply was no time for me to recover, even if I wanted.

That addiction was my life, I lived for the shit. I can't explain how much I was doing. If I had been sitting at home talking to someone for two or three hours I would have done a quarter of an ounce, or about seven grams, while they were there chatting... all day...every day.

Karen Dunn had witnessed both my meteoric rise

in the DJ world, and my rapid decline into cocaine dependency.

Brandon was earning serious money now... but his coke habit was consuming all of it. He was one of my bigger earners... two or three gigs in the week, two or three on a Friday and two or three on a Saturday...and that lasted for many years.

Everybody loved him... and because he was getting so many bookings, I think that's why he began to take so much gear, simply to keep him up all night and week. But he wasn't a DJ's DJ. Lots of DJs who, let's just say were very into themselves at the time, didn't like his success. They were jealous of him, I think, because of the amount of work he got. They slagged him off for not playing the cooler records. But the crowd loved him because he was so naughty. He was a real crowd pleaser, in fact, just good fun to have around. He'd stand on the decks, all sorts, really play up to the crowd.

Tony Hannan agrees.

Lots of DJs have their sets mapped out beforehand, know exactly what they're going to play, and in what order, but Brandon was always one to get in there, have a good look first and give the crowd exactly what they wanted.

Critics may argue I was too busy mapping out his drug intake to pre-plan a set. Karen Dunn adds:-

Brandon soon became a nightmare to deal with. He made up so many lies, constant excuses and I became a very good liar myself because of him. I once

had to charter a helicopter to get him to a gig because a promoter was so furious at him potentially not turning up, after all the money he'd spent on everything in the lead-up to the event, and the large deposit he'd already laid out. But Brandon was off his head somewhere and unable to get to the other side of the street, let alone the country.

And those promoters were paying me a lot of money, and had done loads of promotion. It eventually came to a head and it started to affect my work and reputation. There was always a party to go to, and I started going out and staying up for days on end.

Amazingly, I cannot remember the helicopter ride! Or which club! But I had worked out a complex network of dealers was vital to help provide enough coke to keep this party animal partying. And there were more than enough dealers happy to relieve me of my cash.

Disturbingly, there was less and less emphasis on the party aspect of it all. More and more now, the coke was a necessity, not a luxury.

I'd stopped doing lines for a while. It was half a teaspoon full of coke at a time now. I tried to cultivate three or four dealers per day at different times. This rota was alternated on every third or fourth day, so as not to give the impression I was taking too much. Little did I know, they were all talking to each other, and keeping up the pretence for me too. It was also at this time that I discovered that Rohypnol (which were nicknamed 'roeys') could help me sleep, long before it was linked to date-rape. A chemist friend of mine would supply these, plus any extra painkillers when my need exceeded what my local GP

was prepared to prescribe.

But the roeys would, at best, only ever get me three hours sleep as my coke intake greatly outweighed even the largest doses of the sleeping tablets.

During the winter of 1995 I was caning the painkillers, in this case distalgesics given to me by the family doctor for the increasing aches and pains that were crippling my body.

As well as the drugs, I was drinking like a fish. Hanging around in pubs waiting for supplies certainly wasn't helping.

And my GP was losing his patience. They don't say they know you're on the gear, but they do, they're not stupid. I was getting those cocaine itches, where it feels like you've got insects under your skin, and the most terrible pains in my back. I was at the doctors every week with some excuse or other.

What I didn't know at that time, was that I had contracted the disease tuberculosis, almost certainly a result of that idiotic plunge from the Star Ferry in Hong Kong.

My GP was saying he was not giving me any more painkillers, but I was getting extra on the side from my pal and banging away at the gear relentlessly too, and then there was the booze - beer, vodka, anything really. As well as my back, my chest was hurting badly as well, so my doctor sent me to hospital for some X-rays and they discovered I had TB, and an unusual strain of it at that. I was rushed straight to an isolation ward.

But despite the obvious desperation of this situation (well to most, anyway) I was still craving the cocaine that I had simply relied on more and more. I was slowly going crazy in there and, when I could, I

was on my mobile begging friends to bring some coke to me at the hospital. I drove some so mad that they did in fact bring it in. Mentioning no names, because I really did have to persuade those in question.

And remember I was literally in isolation, it's like being in a cage at the zoo. The only contact with visitors is through two rubber gloves which are attached through holes in the wall, so I ingeniously conjured up a plan of biting the tip of the index finger off one of the gloves, enabling one visitor under particular duress to, instead of 'delivering me from evil', delivering me some evil, when I shook hands with him.

Then, when the visitors had gone, I'd use anything I could find in and around my bed to snort the coke off. I was in there ten days and getting a delivery most days. It was freaking the nurses out because they were doing my tests and the 'obs' (observation results) were all over the place. I didn't care, I just needed the gear.

Upon my release I headed back to my mum's. I had missed a couple of week's worth of gigs, but would be back on the road again shortly, as long as normal business was resumed with my dealers.

They sent me home, I had this health visitor and I was on a triple therapy treatment for the TB, which is basically three different pills throughout the day.

The pills kill the TB, so that gets cleared quite quickly, then the rest of it is prevention, which I wasn't helping with the coke I was tucking away daily. The staff at Northwick Park Hospital did regular tests on me and I was told the TB was still there, but that it wasn't contagious. I knew I couldn't stop sniffing so I thought "fuck it". I was almost at rock bottom and all the gear was at least helping to numb some of the pains I had. But more and more smoking

meant my lungs were taking a huge battering as well. I was still bang on the gear and back on the piss too.

As 1995 wore on the promoters of my residencies were putting up with my increasingly erratic behaviour, and somehow I was still managing to deliver behind the decks.

The recreational enjoyment had long gone. Looking back, when I came back from Ibiza in 1994 I felt like I was still in party mode. Sure I was doing stupid amounts of coke then, but I still felt like I was partying. However, at the end of 1995 it was now a need.

I was weighing about eight stone and slowly getting jaundice. More trips to hospital and more pain. I was on the road to death, but I didn't give a fuck now. I was putting a brave face on it in public, a classic case of tears of a clown, but this was beat myself up time, take as much gear as I could, and if I died, then it was easier than giving up.



HOW DJING ALMOST KILLED BRANDON BLOCK

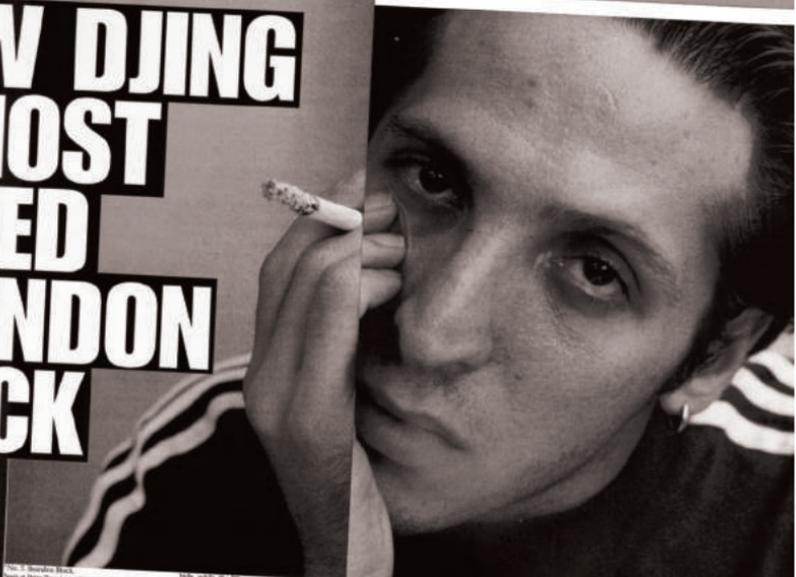
Brandon Block is the good time DJ, the loony guy guaranteed to rock your club and party you all into submission afterwards. But he's been partying too hard, too long and for the past year rumours have been circulating. He was dead, he had TB, he's in hospital. In this exclusive interview, he

How is Brandon Block?
None of these. Brandon at 10p for Britain 1980 wearing high heels and a coat over wearing walking walking down the fair. Antonio High Street in Block. Back in night. Block was digital machine a machine to...

Block, while the DJ can proceed to be looking for a secondly the DJ in question? Well, a Hyman with Brandon Block. Also, a...
CH&Country, Misting, June 1988

Have you Block, do it a couple of...
Block of using clients not any club night with playing...
Block, his name out of records that own like to welcome...

party in...
Block all around great until you realize that Brandon...
of the...
has...



Brandon Block, 1988...
of the...
has...

It's A Wrap

I was facing the biggest battle of my short, yet so far charmed life, but how could I possibly be objective about the sheer scale of my problem?

My dad, Harvey had booked me in to the Charter Nightingale Hospital in west London. I was certainly aware that I wanted a few days to get my head around it, not that I was able to get my head round much at that point. I had this gig at the Ministry Of Sound on the Sunday, but I was still focused on the appointment at the clinic on the Monday. I'd insisted I did the early set so I could be finished by about 1am, but I also had seven grams on me when I left my mum's house in Wembley, on top of a couple of eighths I'd done earlier that day.

I drove myself there and by the time I got to the club in Elephant & Castle 40 minutes later I'd done all seven grams, sniffing up a gram at a time at red traffic lights. The gear was not giving me a hit anymore, just keeping me going, giving me that wired horribleness I somehow craved.

Inside the Ministry a gaggle of my mates were waiting, some there because they had heard this could be my final hurrah, none believing it would be.

I sorted some more gear before I got in the club, gave a load out, did the rest myself and then headed home, shaking the hands of well-wishers as I left. Back in the car I wanted more coke. I headed to the

flat of a dealer in Chalkhill, ordered up an eighth, did that with him and his mate, and got another one to take home.

Within an hour, I'd done that, and was on my way back to Chalkhill, doing another eighth with them, then back home with another eighth for me. That lasted even less time and so I was back at Chalkhill, at 4am, but the dealer had gone to bed. I was trying to climb up his drainpipe, so I could break in through his window. I'd done more than 30 grams now, but I still felt I needed more before I knocked it on the head. I think I was hoping for some kind of massive party, but I was on my own and desperate.

Back at my mum's I was tearing my hair out in my bedroom when I realised there must be some gear in my rug, eventually managing to scrape about three grams out of it! I washed it up myself and smoked it as crack, for what I hoped was one final time.

By now it was about 6am, I eventually managed to get about an hour's sleep, but it took at least seven 'roeys' to achieve that. I got up, tidied my room, had a shower and jumped on the train to Paddington, and checked into Dr Shanahan's Charter Nightingale clinic.

Admitting myself to the clinic in November, 1996, was no mean feat, but getting and keeping clean would be the difficult bit. And I would have to do it all without my faithful 'roeys'.

I thought I was well prepared because I had a big jar of 'roeys' in my bag. But the staff at the clinic quickly searched that and confiscated the lot. They took me upstairs, did blood tests and took a gamma reading to check out my liver function. A good gamma reading is between 45 and 65, while a heavy

drinker would register between 200 and 300. Mine was over 600!

Leading consultant psychiatrist Bill Shanahan had the unenviable task of trying to save my life and could hardly believe what he had found.

I have to say that then and, in fact, to this day I have never come across someone who was taking so much cocaine and was still able to stand up.

In 1992 we had been warned by the Americans to expect a huge cocaine epidemic, because of the amount that was getting through to the UK, but by 1996 we still hadn't seen the effects yet. Then Brandon walks in and he's doing around 28 grams a day. It was amazing.

The tests had revealed that Brandon had extremely abnormal liver enzymes, and years later an operation was needed to remove a piece of his lung.

Essentially, as well as the TB, Brandon had chemical hepatitis and on top of all this he was incredibly depressed. It was classic post-cocaine depression. He had been living for so many years with every day virtually like suicide Tuesday, because it's always the day after he had used. And because he was using drugs every day the depression was relentless. If you can't get rid of the cocaine, you'll never get rid of the depression.

But as I was slowly weaned off the cocaine, my resolve began to improve.

And I believe that sorting out my drug debt before my admission to the clinic was not only vital, but also showed that, sub-consciously, he was preparing to give up cocaine.

It's hard to remember or describe what state I was

in. But at least I now knew I didn't want to die and I'd got my head around the fact that I didn't have to die. I'd had so much pain and mental torment by now that I just didn't want another day of that pain.

Despite the mess I was in I'd actually pretty much got myself straight financially, making sure all my debts with any dealers were paid up, so that when I did stop I didn't need to see anybody to pay up any tabs and in turn so I wouldn't be tempted to get any more gear. There was also a feeling somewhere inside me that if I didn't make it through for some reason, that at least I was paid up.

And this wasn't like sorting out a couple of credit card bills. I always had pages and pages of people to pay, people already paid and crossed off, etc. Most people have a 'to do' list, I always seemed to have a pad full of gear put on tic that I had to clear. But I always managed to muddle through. Just before I went to the clinic I made sure all debts were paid up, although that left me absolutely skint.

They were crazy times, and looking back I just don't know how I maintained that existence, let alone enforced it.

Top Of The Pops

After a brief foray into production with the FUBAR track in the mid-90s, I embarked on a new chapter of my career in 1998 and a more concentrated stab at producing.

I hooked up with old pals Fran Sidoli and Ricky Morrison. Fran was my old mate from north Wembley and a jazz dancer I admired, while Ricky was Fran's mate, from Alperton, who had a sound system, simply titled The System.

Both had gone on to become respected producers in their own right and the trio were approached by Dancin' Danny D, a London-based producer/remixer of some repute, who had helped bring acid house to the masses in 1988 with his No 3 hit We Call It Acieed, under the guise D-Mob.

Danny D was looking after these guys called Baby Bumps and he asked Ricky and Fran, who were now recording as M & S and had done stuff with Michelle Weeks and Barbara Tucker, if they would do a remix of a track Baby Bumps were doing called Burnin', which had sampled The Tramps anthem Disco Inferno. So Fran and Ricky asked me if I would like to get involved, because we'd been talking about doing some stuff, and they suggested we go by the name of Blockster. My profile was very high at this time and I'd been clean for a couple of years so it made

sense. Budnik, a reviewer on online music bible Discogs, sums up the Baby Bumps release like this, commenting:-

It's not big, it's not clever, but boy did this do some damage in Ibiza, season 1998. This was absolutely everywhere. It's not the most creative piece ever, so if you're going to steal some Tramps strings and bass you have to execute it very very well, which Blockster has done here. Let's make no pretence, this was made as a pure party record, it does exactly what it says on the tin. I used to love this, and I still do, it's so chunky and so funky. It's those strings and that bassline that just make the drop on this so enjoyable and I really like those chunky hi hats that drive the track along so well.

And while many of my peers wouldn't have loved those "chunky hi-hats", they would have found the chunky cheques on their way hard to turn down.

Our mix of Burnin' got Baby Bumps into the Top 40 and so Danny D wanted us to do something ourselves and hooked us up with Ministry Of Sound, and we started working on our own release, a reworking of The Bee Gees classic You Should Be Dancing, which was an anthem from their seminal Saturday Night Fever soundtrack, and which famously included Barry Gibb's now trademark falsetto vocals for the first time. We had put out a white label promo using the original Bee Gees vocals, but then had to get them re-sung for the official Ministry Of Sound release.

We got a nice advance for the two singles, and an album. The record labels were still giving money away at the time, and dance music had been big busi-

ness for them for the last decade or so. Ministry had set up lots of different labels to run alongside their successful club, and had realised that as well as putting out loads of compilations, they could save money in licensing if they owned a lot of the tracks that would go on those albums, as well as earning loads of money back by licensing those tracks to all the other big compilations other major labels were putting out.

We invested the majority of our advance in a state-of-the-art studio in the basement behind the old R & D record shop that we all used to spend so much time in, so hanging out in Rayners Lane appealed to us from a sentimental point of view. To get the highest quality sound, we built a room within a room, and paid for the best equipment out at the time.

Fortunately for the Ministry, their faith was repaid and upon release in January 1999, *You Should Be Dancing* went to No 3, and stayed in the national charts for 16 weeks. It meant that a spot on *Top Of The Pops* beckoned for, 26 years after, as a starry-eyed six-year-old, I first met the show's then producer, neighbour and family friend Brian Whitehouse.

The track was massive for us, and as well as being included on all of the Ministry comps, it went on all the other massive ones, like *Now That's What I Call Music 42* and *Now This And That...* and it meant that my dream as a child of appearing on *Top Of The Pops* was actually going to happen. When the chart placing was announced on the Sunday evening I was at home on my own, because I'd been gigging all weekend. Fran and Ricky were listening together. We all screamed at each other down the phone and met up

for a good old drink up.

When Blockster was released, my old pal Norman Cook, now in his Fatboy Slim guise, was No 1 with Praise You, a track accompanied by a hilarious and award-winning video directed by Spike Jonze. Norman had enjoyed No 1s in the past, first as the bass player of The Housemartins in 1986 with Caravan Of Love, then in 1990 with Lindy Layton in his Beats International guise and The Clash / SOS Band-sampling Dub Be Good To Me.

At the time I think I was one of the, if not THE, highest-placed modern day club DJs in the UK charts. Tall Paul had reached No 11 a couple of years earlier with Rock Da House, so to get to No 3 was fantastic, and it went straight in at No 3 too.

Norman had been involved in bands and doing his different things for quite a while now, but I wasn't a musician, let alone a pop star, so for me to get into the top three of the UK charts and to actually appear on Top Of The Pops, which had been such a British institution all my life, was superb. The Spice Girls had the Christmas No 1 a few weeks earlier with Goodbye and they were still selling quite a few records and obviously Praise You was massive too, so I was more than happy to get to No 3.

The Top Of The Pops experience was great. We were down at the Elstree Studios in Borehamwood, and it was a top day out. To be on TOTP was something I never ever envisaged, and it was an honour to be on the same stage as the various acts of the time, and a bonus to go out on prime-time BBC TV as well. I was on stage with Danny Love, our singer, a guy from Streatham, who had re-sung the Bee Gees original vocals (so no pressure there, then!). We had some cute dancers with us, but Fran and Ricky had

stayed back stage so I was left to do the trademark DJ come producer wally bit behind the decks, which I was happy to do and which I'd always excelled at anyway. I was wearing this shirt with centres of records all over it and a big floppy hat, which a mate had given me. I tried not to take it too seriously because I was standing there behind the decks basically not doing a lot. I wanted to look silly, and I certainly did. It was great fun.

The kids in the studio were not exactly cheering for us, like the reception that Spice Girl Mel C got. She had done that track with Bryan Adams, Baby When You're Gone, which I really liked at the time, and so me Fran and Ricky met up with her, and Kate Thornton, who was presenting the show. It was great to be involved in Top Of The Pops, especially as it's no longer with us.

SORRY RON, IT WAS ONE BIG CON

Brandon **BRITs** sham

THE DJ who squared up to Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood at the Brits last night hit back saying: "I didn't want to kill Ronnie - I was conned." The showbiz crowd at

EXCLUSI

by **BEN TOOD**
became involved in a
with rock veteran Wo
of shobus Ronnie W



SET UP: Brandon Block



SHAKEN UP: Ronnie W



ay, March 6, 2000



BRIT OF AGGRO: Brandon comes face to face with Ronnie Wood (above) and the Rolling Stone urges his hardman pal Vinnie Jones (right) not to send the top club DJ spinning



Brits & In Pieces

On the face of it, going head to head with a Rolling Stones legend at The Brits was probably not the smartest thing I have ever done, but like so many times before the devil inside me took over!

And once again I seemed to come out of the whole thing with all the extra controversy and attention adding to his worth.

The ceremony came at the start of an extraordinary fortnight, even by my own standards.

While this little episode in my life could not be blamed on cocaine - I'd been clean almost four years by now - alcohol did have a major part to play.

The dreaded champagne reception was at the route of the problem and we've all been there, peaking too early on an empty stomach at a wedding or corporate function...just haven't ended up on stage at Earls Court bickering with Ronnie Wood in front of a TV audience of ten million and counting.

I created the latest instalment of Brits-gate, which had previously seen Samantha Fox and Mick Fleetwood 'die' on stage, Jarvis Cocker moon at Michael Jackson and Chumbawumba drench MP John Prescott.

It was an interesting cast already, but now myself, Wood, Big Brother presenter Davina McCall and American Beauty movie star Thora Birch were enter-

ing stage left or, in my case, stage front.

No stranger to awards ceremonies after those various Caner Of The Year gongs from the likes of Muzik Magazine, my association with The Brits started in February 1997, and around that time each year the annual awards ceremony celebrates music released the previous year. My old pal Matthew Donegan had booked me and, for us two rollerskating teens, it had been some journey.

Donegan points out:-

When we hooked up again for The Brits, we did both look back and laugh, and say “fuck me, we’ve come a long way”. We were a couple of boys from suburbia who didn’t come from a privileged background, with no help up the ladder. Everything we’d achieved up until that point, we’d done off our own back. Every step we’d made, we made it for ourselves. We didn’t have any relatives in the music industry, no lift up whatsoever. We’d achieved what we’d achieved through our merits, our hard work and our tenacity, so at the time he had the Blockster thing, and I was organising the after-party for the Brits, and we were like “yeah, we’ve done all right here”.

The first year I booked Brandon for the after-party was 1997, and I was working for Cymon Eckles at his Riki-Tiks bar in Soho. Brandon had come out of the clinic in October ’96, and by February ’97 he was still a bit shaky and he came up to me after a few records and said he wasn’t feeling quite right. I booked him again for the ’98 and ’99 parties, and then again in 2000, when he was nominated.

I was delighted to play all of the after-parties at The Brits. It was obviously a good gig, and I always thought I'd be able to blag a couple of tickets to the actual event and make a night of it. That all went well each year, and then a couple of weeks before the 2000 ceremony, I got a call from The Ministry Of Sound saying that the Blockster track had been drafted in as a late addition to the Best Dance Act category.

Wamdue Project, who had scored a massive No 1 national charts hit with King Of My Castle had been disqualified because someone had finally realised that the producer behind it, Chris Brann, was actually American and his singer was from Argentina.

I told the Ministry we needed to get a table and they were arguing that we wouldn't win so it wasn't worth it. I told them not to be tight bastards. They gave in and booked us a table. I think it cost them seven or eight grand in the end, but peanuts to them at the time.

Me, Ricky and Fran booked a limo, my dad and Brady came too, and we all headed to Earls Court, dropped my records off in the after-party room when we arrived, then headed to the reception area and got stuck into the champagne. There were some fancy canapes, but I wasn't interested in the food and I was necking the shampoo like there was no tomorrow. Everyone one was shouting "Blocks... Blocko...Brandon...what's happening?" and I was chatting to all the bods I knew, including Norman Cook.

We got to the table and I was already blotto. Ministry CEO Mark Rodel was sitting there, with Matt Jagger, then the managing accountant at Ministry and later head honcho at Universal Records, and

there was also three other big hitters from various large companies the Ministry were trying to schmooze. The five of us sat down but everyone was moving around, drinking more and gassing between the tables.

Next to us was the Radio 1 table, including Chris Moyles, Trevor Nelson and Annie Nightingale. It was great hanging out with Trevor for a bit, one of my old sparring partners from the Kiss days. I've also got a lot of time for Moylesy, and massive respect for what he has achieved in his career. I often bumped into him at various functions when he first joined Radio 1, and we've hung out having a few drinks together over the years, also with his partner Comedy Dave too. And I remember myself and Moylesy laughing heartedly that evening at The Brits. I would have loved to see his face after what happened next, though.

The ceremony was under way and I was talking to Dane Bowers and Mark from Another Level at their table, but from this point on I can only remember things vaguely.

Out of the blue, Dane and Mark were saying to me "Brandon, we just heard your name, you've won an award, mate", and I said "what...no...you're joking...really?" And with that, I just got up and walked and headed towards the stage. I didn't even look around to see what was going on. There was an award being given away so at that moment there was no security by the stage. I was marching up towards the stage, had soon passed Norman Cook and Pete Tong, and they were both muttering "Brandon, what are you doing?", and I just carried on and looked at them as if to say, "don't piss on my fire, I'm going to collect my award". I'd made my mind up. I was going to get

this award, whatever it fucking was.

Blockster radio plugger Tony Byrne had arrived at Earls Court later, and was surprised at just how well oiled his client was when the starters were brought out.

Brandon had clearly been drinking all day. We were about to eat our Chinese starter when, with chopsticks in hand, Brandon wandered off to see Dane Bowers and the Another Level boys on one of the 'platinum' tables near the front of the stage. He was definitely pissed by this point and he probably hadn't eaten a thing because the starters were just coming out. He was apparently going on to Dane about how he was nominated for an award, when Dane said "mate, they've just said your name, you've won, you've won".

What ensued next is Blocko gold, immortalised forever on various YouTube clips and, at the time, throughout the tabloid press.

So I got up on stage and Ronnie was up there with Davina McCall and Thora Birch and I was stood to the side of them. I leant over and they all looked at me, as if to say, "who the fuck is he?" and at that point I realised that I shouldn't be up there. Then Thora Birch announced "and the award goes to...Notting Hill"...so it was obviously a film category and you can see my face, as if to say, "oh, no...". Davina looked over and said "hello, what's your name?", so I leant into the mic and shouted Brandon Block".

If I watch it now I think, "mate, you're having a right laugh...what the hell were you thinking?" But everyone in the crowd was going mad, all the people

I knew were jumping up and down, pissing themselves, and I forgot how many people were watching on TV because all I could see was familiar faces at the front. At that point I was getting ushered off...when Ronnie said into the mic, "who's that cunt?" so I ran back, but not to kick off, just to carry on the banter. Ronnie threw a drink over me and I threw one back at him.

When I got to the mic, I said "what did you call me?", and he said "the nicest man I ever met".

Turns out that he was worried because George Harrison had been attacked recently and I was staggering about with a set of chopsticks in my hand from the meal they were serving at the table. So I said "thank you very much, you old bastard". At which point I was finally muscled off the stage.

Here's the full transcript of my one minute, fifteen seconds of Brits fame:-

Thora Birch: And the winner is...hello...and the winner is...OK...confusion...the winner is Notting Hill

Davina: OK...

Ronnie Wood: Oh, it's not him...what the hell's going on here? We have an intruder...

Davina: Fantastic...what's your name mate?

Brandon (leaning into the mic): Brandon Block...oi, oi...

Brandon is escorted off stage by a couple of burly security guards.

Davina: Bye mate, bye

Ronnie: Get off stage, you cunt

Brandon was in the process of being escorted off stage by security, but runs back on to the stage, and Ronnie throws his drink over him.

Brandon: What did you call me?

Ronnie: The nicest man, I'd ever met

Brandon: Thank you very much, you old bastard

As Brandon is bundled off stage, this time successfully...

Ronnie: You've wasted my drink, now fuck off

Davina: Good on you Ronnie

Thora Birch: Yeah, you rock

Ronnie: I thought it was somebody important...he is now

Davina: OK, now to accept the award from Notting Hill, it's Hugh Grant's annoying sister Emma Chambers

I had drunkenly earned my place in Brits folklore, not so much 15 minutes of fame as a couple minutes of chaos, which would help make me a household name, well certainly for the next week or so anyway. However, a certain friend of mine was far from happy.

The twist in the tale was that Jamie Wood, Ronnie's stepson, was Matthew Donegan's business partner in his Outer Sanctum events company, a vital fact not immediately reported at the time. That was the irony. I knew Jamie well and I'd just had a slanging match with his dad in front of all those people. The security took me down the covered corridor which led to the VIP area, and there were all these paps and

they were saying “Blocks, what have you done, mate?” I got to the end, and there was Matthew with his arms crossed, fuming. I’ve never been so embarrassed about anything in my whole life. Me and Matthew are lifelong friends and to upset him like that was terrible.

Apart from anything else I was so pissed and I was saying “I’m so sorry” and Matthew was glaring at me, shouting “what have you done, you fucking idiot?” and at that point I started crying and my dad was saying “Matt, don’t have a go at him” and Matt was screaming “Harve, have you seen what he’s done?” ... and it was really weird because we were all old family friends. I said “look, I’m sorry, I’ll just go in there and play some records”, and Matthew was having none of it, saying “you’re not going in there, you can’t go in there, you nutter, you’ll get lynched”. Then he ripped my cheque up in front of me and slung me out.

Some Concluding thoughts...

Our generation has so far come off relatively unscathed, in the scheme of things.

There are numerous people who have died of drug-related deaths and many families who have lost loved ones. I send my deepest sympathies to them all. Looking back, many of us were so lucky to scrape through such an experimental era.

Cocaine is a big killer, but millions of people who have taken pills or use coke regularly on a recreational basis are still luckily alive. Who knows what effects on them there will be in ten or twenty years time.

Considering what I've got up to during my life, I'm overjoyed to still be alive, and now I have the opportunity to prolong my life even further, for the sake of my daughter, the rest of my family and obviously myself.

It's taken me so long to catch up where growing up is concerned, and I don't think I will ever really catch up. I've done serious damage, I know I have. The last time I saw Bill Shanahan, I asked him if I had done permanent damage, because I still have times when I feel really shit, and he said, "well, I'll be honest, you have done permanent damage, because you took so much of that stuff. It kills brain cells, and

there's no way that you could come out of that unscathed".

When I started doing drugs in the early days it ran alongside the music, and with ecstasy it was, of course, because of the music initially.

Obviously I took drug-taking to all sorts of extremes, particularly with cocaine. The whole thing about the recreational use of drugs then was that it was meant to be fun, but nowadays there is so much crack and heroin on the streets...drugs less associated with club culture. Also, people are taking prescribed drugs more and more on a supposedly recreational level too.

In fact, I'm amazed what a problem drugs are in this country now. I know the government are very serious about rehabilitation and everyone has the capacity to change. Help is there if people want it.

When I was growing up I didn't know what an alcoholic was, but at the time I think my drinking would have been classed as binge-drinking, and when you're younger, that's actually looked upon as normal behaviour for someone growing up in the UK. Most people grow out of that, though.

I became addicted to cocaine because I took so much of the stuff. Obviously my DJ fees meant I could afford it, at least for a while, and there was always a dealer around, so that made it easier.

I didn't have a 'normal job' to go to the next day or any day, in fact, and who can say whether things would have been different for me if I had had what you would call a 'normal job'. I certainly wouldn't have had such easy access to coke. Maybe it would have been different if I'd got involved in a serious relationship in my early 20s too, got married, had kids the conventional way, etc.

All things considered, for me, taking cocaine was all about the buzz, let's make no mistake about that. Yes, I had the money, yes, I enjoyed the escapism and yes, I enjoyed the buzz, but at the end of the day I had one of the best jobs in the world, so quite why I needed any other buzz than that, I don't know.

At that time for glamour and rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous, you couldn't beat it, and, well, I guess for a while we were the rich and famous too.

Fast forward to December 2016 and I had just finished a four and a half year stint working as a project worker in the substance misuse field. It was as life-changing as anything I had experienced in my colourful career. On the subject of 'life-changing', I was also preparing to enter the Celebrity Big Brother (CBB) house just weeks later at the start of 2017. I asked Matt Trollope if we could add a couple of extra chapters to our book, some further thoughts which had manifested and developed into a refined belief system since publication, and largely due to my full-time job in the drugs rehabilitation field.

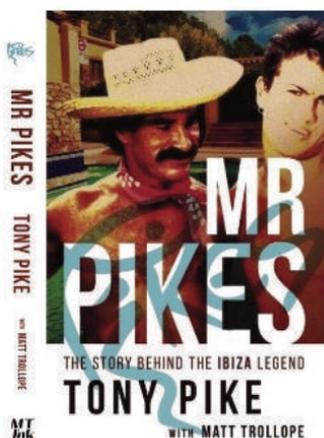
CBB had nearly come to fruition on a number of occasions, but now I was finally preparing to enter the Celebrity Big Brother house. As ever, it was time for a lot of soul-searching in the run up to this latest adventure in my life. So nothing new there.

Since this book was first published in 2011 I had been on a whole new journey in itself, due to my new vocation. Certain things became apparent after I first undertook my job as a project worker. The first thing that hit me was that, despite my hands-on experi-

ence and what I thought I knew, I still had a lot to learn. And it was this realisation that sent me on another rollercoaster ride of emotions.

I'd been experiencing 'Survivor's Guilt'. This became apparent when I looked back at how out of control my drug use had become. Back then I had it in my mind that I was going to die. It was bludgeoned in there. I think the fact that I hadn't died left me with huge guilt. For me to have come all this way, to a place where I'm happy, where I have continuity and stability and, in other words, lead a pretty normal life, in which I'm still DJing and holding down a job, well, that basically all came with a lot of guilt for me. Why should life be so good?

Also on MT Ink



Mr Pikes - The Story Behind The Ibiza Legend - Tony Pike

The playboy who built himself a playground reveals all in his electric memoir.

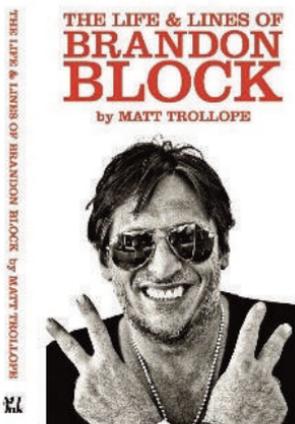
The iconic hotelier reflects on a life of hedonism and the globe-trotting backstory that influenced his creation of pioneering Balearic boho bolthole, Pikes.

Pike talks candidly about his relationships with hotel guests and friends including George Michael, Freddie Mercury, Julio Iglesias and lover Grace Jones...and also goes exclusively behind the scenes at the Club Tropicana video shoot.

The Life & Lines of Brandon Block

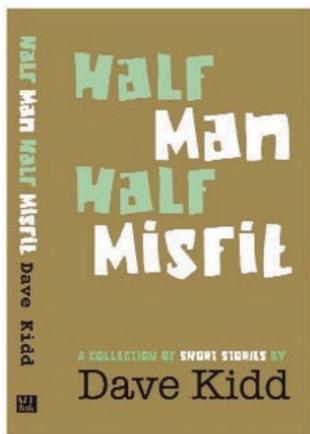
Brandon strips back his dramatic life as we chart the meteoric rise of a cocky schoolboy from Wembley who became an Ibiza legend along the way. A symbol for an acid house generation of excess, Brandon headlined a clubland era that changed the lives of millions.

His spiralling drug habit peaked at an amazing ounce of cocaine a day but somehow he survived to tell the tale. Includes extra chapters published in 2017 as Brandon prepared to enter the Celebrity Big Brother house.



Half Man Half Misfit - Dave Kidd

- What happens when a man statistically proven to be the happiest person on the planet reaches the point of optimum euphoria?
- Can love possibly flourish between an agoraphobic fraudster and a hypochondriac Eskimo?
- When a middle-aged couple visit a bric-a-brac shop in the Cotswolds, what effect will a woollen Guatemalan peasant doll have on their miserable marriage?

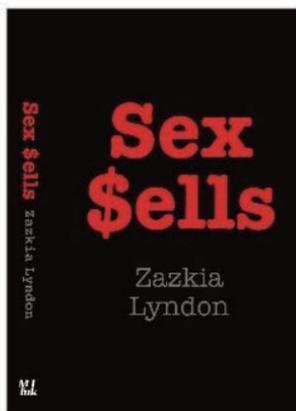
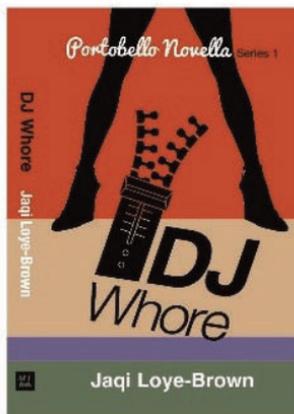


DJ Whore - Jaqi Loye-Brown (Pts 1 - 4)

In pre-Millennial London Heavenly Angel, the alter-ego of disillusioned Yvonne-Leigh, worships at the altar and ego of DJ Starkey Moran.

Jaqi Loye-Brown's debut four-part series DJ Whore is set in the late 1990s, peering over the shoulders of the movers and shakers, fakers and takers.

Through her Portobello Novella series, Jaqi explores the frayed hem of a cutting edge era, tiptoeing through a club-scene rarely explored in a chick-lit.



Sex Sells - Zazkia Lyndon

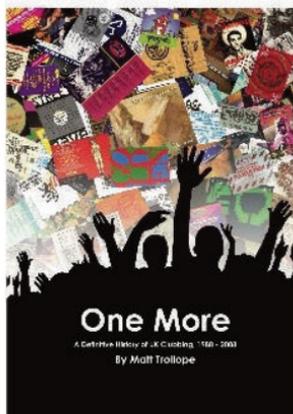
Life will never be the same again for a group of north London twenty-somethings when renegade house-mate Stassy Thomas submits a sex survey to a tabloid newspaper in this romp-com set in the mid-noughties.

Stassy's 'stage husband' Preston Price feels the full force of Stassy's lies. As her life spirals out of control she comes to realise that while the rules change, the game remains the same. Sex Sells.

One More: A Definitive History of UK Clubbing - 1988 - 2008 - Matt Trollope

The story behind the superclubbing generation features the era's resident DJs including Jeremy Healy, Sasha, Judge Jules, Danny Rampling, Graeme Park, Brandon Block and many more.

With promoters behind clubs like Venus, Renaissance, Hacienda, Golden and Miss Money Penny's they answer the question: If tonight was your last ever gig, what would be your 'One More' track?



At mt-ink.co.uk or all Amazon sites