

TITLE: MKSkate Transcript

Name: Carter Hewlett
Date of Birth: 1985
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Interviewed by: Nathan Lindsell
Duration: 00:93:00

This is Nathan Lindsell. It's 7th July, 2019. Can I ask your name and the year you were born, please?

Yeah, sorry I was not expecting you to do it so corporately like that. The year I was born?

So just say your name and the year you were born.

Ok. My name is Carter Hewlett and I was born in 1985.

How did you first encounter skateboarding?

I saw a guy skate past my house ...

... I first came across or however you say it ...

The first time I encountered skateboarding was I saw a guy skating across my street, like I looked out ... I could hear it. I looked out my street and I saw this guy skateboarding. It was like a proper skateboard. It had a nose and a tail and I was like, 'That's fucking ... that's cool, I want one of those.' Is that alright?

What was your own personal first experience of skateboarding? If you could elaborate...when you got your first board and stuff?

My first experience of skateboarding was...I think I was probably eight and my dad gave me this Bart Simpson skateboard...like old...like fish-style board. But I didn't actually skate with it. I just kind of fucked around with it and it wasn't until I was fourteen that I actually bought a skateboard, like a proper skateboard. Because, at the time, skateboarding wasn't very popular so I didn't know anyone that skated.

When did you first start skating in Milton Keynes?

Do you need a year? What's the deal? Do you need a year or do you need,

like, my age or...how do you want me to...

Say your age and then just the experience...

Can you ask me the question again?

Can you say, 'I first started skating in Milton Keynes,' and then the year.

Yeah, but can you just ask me the question? No, that's alright...

When did you start skating in Milton Keynes?

Ok. So I first started skating in Milton Keynes, probably...yeah, thirteen or fourteen...hang on. I don't want this to be like...this is, like, an important question I think and I don't want it to be shit. Actually, I'll just go with that. I think I'm trying to overcomplicate it. Yeah. I first started skating in Milton Keynes when I was, like, thirteen or fourteen. I'll just go with that. I'll get into more detailed stuff later, maybe.

Where did you first start skating? Was it like the Buszy?

Where? No. Ok, so the first place I started skateboarding was at...it was in Bletchley, where I grew up. Outside...I don't know if you're going to interview him...but outside Mark (unclear) house. For a while that was like...that was **the** spot. So there was a group of us that went to the same school so we would all skate outside. And coming to skate at the train station or the bus station that was like...that was like that's where the good people go. That's where the cool people go and skate and I was like, 'You're not fucking getting me there, not for a while.' And then, eventually, I got the courage to go there. Is that alright?

So how old were you when you first started skating at the bus station then? And how long had you been skating?

So, I first started skating, probably...yeah, like thirteen/fourteen but then, maybe...but then I think, maybe, it was like still fourteen that I eventually got the courage to go skate at the bus station. It just seemed like super intimidating to me because I didn't really know too many people but then as soon as...literally, as soon as I got dropped off...my mum dropped me off at the train station. I didn't know anyone and then Nozza just come up and started talking to me, like, straight away. I didn't even know him...he, like, just started talking to me as I came in. Sort of, 'This lad should be alright.' I don't know how well that's going to cut because of...that doesn't make sense.

It's fine.

Do you know what I mean? Because I said...because, actually...yeah, I did skate here first. That's where I met Nozza and then I started skating there.

But don't overthink it because it's not like the kind of films we're used to

making here. It really isn't. It's an oral history ...

I'm thinking, 'Right, you're having to edit.'

*No, no. It's not a problem. If there's a problem for me I'll let you know.
(Unclear) question...it's alright.*

We'll stop it. It's kind of...the form's different, probably...

You're talking to Nathan. Just chill, it's cool.

Ok.

0:05:02

*Were you filming? When did you start filming skateboarding? Were you
filming at that time as well or did that come later?*

I started filming skateboarding, probably about...yeah, pretty quickly, when I was fifteen. I'm supposed to still look at you, aren't I, because my eyeline's going to be fucked up? It is tricky because...the thing is...no offence, but you're looking at the paper so it's like I'm disconnected. You guys are looking at me...that's alright. The question, alright.

So I first started filming skateboarding when I was, probably, sixteen, maybe fifteen. Let me think. No, I'll do that again. It was fifteen. I want this to be accurate even though it's not that important but I want it to be accurate. Yeah, I first started filming skateboarding when I was fifteen and before that I had a teacher, actually, at school. I told the teacher I was skateboarding. He gave me his own, like, 35 mil camera to take photos with and then I just wanted a video camera because photos are cool but I wanted to actually see and record things happening rather than, like, capturing moments and I still do that, like, twenty years later. That's very cool.

If you could probably elaborate on what your first camera was and how you got hold of that.

Yeah. So, I bought my first camera and by bought...my mum bought it for me because I was a kid. I didn't have enough money for a camera so she bought me a video camera, like a Hi8 video camera when we were on holiday in, like, some Spanish island. It was like the weirdest place to be buying a camera. It's like some Hitachi, like, Hi8 thing. The quality sucks and it's just not designed to film skateboarding but I didn't know at the time. It had a flip out screen and I was like, 'That's all I need. I need to be able to see it and have the camera low.' So that seemed like the right thing. I still have that camera, I still have that and now I use a RED cinema camera but...I don't know. Is that...

What was your path from filming on the streets of Milton Keynes to becoming a professional skateboarder? Did you...?

Professional filmmaker, because I definitely was never a professional skateboarder.

We'd just like the process of when...just started filming (unclear) and eventually your group got bigger and you started filming everyone...just talking about putting, like, small videos together... because it was you and (unclear), right? Just started off doing videos together?

Well, Mike would kind of do his own ones and then I just...everyone had a camera. Yes, sorry. I'm just saying this out loud.

I'm trying not to look at you...

Yes, that's fine. I'm just trying to sort of say it out loud so then...

What's nice...what we're trying to do because a lot of the audience won't be skateboarders so we're trying to find that kind of human link that they'll understand, so they'll...for them someone who starts off skateboarding and then ends up going to college and doing, sort of, filming... interests... it's kind of demystifying and de-intimidating the public.

So, maybe, you just go... like, your first few, smaller videos and then on to, like, (unclear) stuff.

Yeah, I can go into detail about that stuff because I basically...like, if you want I can...?

Do...let's do that because that's what makes your story different from the other guys we're filming.

Ok. I mean, it won't necessarily...I guess it won't be necessarily from a question. I can just talk about it. So, I mean, I feel like I owe my entire life and career to skateboarding and to Milton Keynes, like, and my friends...let me start again actually. That was lame.

I feel like I owe pretty much, like, what I do for a living to the Busby and to skateboarding and overall, probably, to Milton Keynes. Like when I first... when I got that first camera to film skateboarding...this is terrible. I'm trying to make it too wordy. This is why it's so much easier when I'm like just talking. Sorry. Maybe you can give me like a prompt or something. If you tell me...

Once you started filming ... what was the first video that you made? Can you describe it?

Yeah, ok. So the first...sorry, I'm just like...because there's so much and I don't know what's like...I don't know where to kind of...

No, because a lot of it will be small clips anyway. Some of it will be on an app, some of it...so it might...

Because the first video...the first proper one that we had the premiere for, that was just the EGC video, right?

Yeah.

That's what that was called?

0:10:00

Yeah, that's what it was called but we would film with...everyone had, like... Mark had a camera and I had a camera, we would just film but no one...ok, I think over that...so, yeah. I first made a skate film, probably after about four or five years of skateboarding so every...there was a few people that had video cameras and everyone was kind of filming, but no one really did anything with it and I felt like it was important to kind of do something with that footage and show that to people.

So the first video...the first skate film I made was just called 'The Elder Gate Crew Video', which is not a creative name in any way but...do you need me to go into, like, the name...like is it worth talking about the name of the crew?

Yeah, give us as much detail and then ...

You describe what EGC is.

I'm like the target audience ... I'm a middle-aged woman who knows sod all.

Yeah, that's the thing.

So if you just say things like Elder Gate that means nothing so...

So, yeah. You just describe what EGC is and then go into the meat of it.

So...I need to stop saying so at the beginning of stuff. It's fucking annoying. So, Elder Gate Crew or EGC was...or is...is the...I guess the title or the crew name of just all the group of friends that I grew up skateboarding with and still skate with now. This sounds terrible.

No, it's perfect.

Really?

Yeah, carry on.

Yes. So the Buszy is where we would spend eight hours a day, like when we're not at school or we're not working. We would be at the Buszy, which is on Elder Gate so we decided to go with the name 'Elder Gate Crew', which is actually a rip-off of a crew in LA...of like a bunch of pro skaters that we, kind of, thought were like...they were like the coolest skaters at the time and they all lived on this one street called Warner Avenue and they, for a while, called

themselves the 'Warner Avenue Crew', so we kind of just like ripped that off and made EGC and then...Elder Gate Crew. How's that?
Can you describe the video?

So the first film I made was called 'The Elder Gate Crew Video'. Was it video or film? The EGC...

Was it video? From what I remember because the premiere it was just 'The EGC Video'.

Can you tell us about the video and the premiere?

Yeah, ok. The first skate film I made was called 'The EGC Video' and it was...it was about forty minutes of us skateboarding...literally...just at the Buszy. It was, kind of, just like two years, maybe three years of footage where someone felt like they would kind of...they wanted to get clips so we would film it and not really know where that footage was going and then, eventually... I'm fucking going round in such a weird way with this, sorry. Let me start again.

It's all relevant, the way you're doing it.

Yes, just let it roll a bit.

Because what preceded that was a couple of YouTube edits and then, when you posted them, it was like, 'Oh, shit! Let's get it on really', because I remember you made a couple of edits. You made the Buszy edit and then the Buszy Edit 2 and then, it was upon everyone seeing them and like, 'Oh, shit. That's actually like do some shit and try a bit harder, right?'

Yeah, yeah, for sure. Ok.

*Lit a bit of a fire under people...
We're not trying to put words into your mouth.*

No, it's fine. It's good. I don't want to be a dick but is it possible...can we swap, just because I feel like the engagement...does it matter...?

(Unclear ... all talking at once)

I just think it might be a bit easier.

That's absolutely fine. Nate's done so many...

No disrespect either. I just feel like when you're talking then, it's kind of...

No, that's why we've got a team (unclear)... that's the whole point.

So, you start...I'll talk about the edits first, right?

You've explained getting into filming and you and Mark filming and doing stuff outside his house. Filming stuff down here and then there's a couple of edits on YouTube. Can you talk about those a little bit?

Yeah. So should I talk about them as if it's prior to the video.

I'd say because they preceded it really and that was the kind of thing...for me, personally, when I saw those edits come up that was what made me think, 'Oh, maybe we can actually like, really try and do a little something that might represent our little crew.'

But you can do it in whatever order...

It's hard to put it into a question...just describe the process and really like...

When you first recognised you had something that other people would want to watch, it was interesting to an audience.

0:15:16

Once you start showing (unclear)...

Yeah, ok. This is worth it.

Let's let you roll.

If I put my leg here, is this gonna...you don't hear that.

If you're doing that with your hand all the time...but if you just do it with your leg, that's fine.

It's just don't kick it, you'll be alright.

Ok.

I'll let you know.

So if you just describe the process of coming up, stacking footage, realising that there's probably enough to maybe do something with.

Yeah. I'm just like...I'm just aware, because to me, like, this is important...like what I say, without sounding narcissistic like...I want to make sure that what I say, whether you use it or not, is like...

Accurate?

Yeah, and it's because I do owe...I feel like I owe my life to this place.

Well, I think a lot of the time that's...

Let it roll. That's the story we want.

That's what I mean, like. I want to get that out there.

Tell us, tell us.

Fuck me, yes.

Why do you think you owe your life to this place?

I mean, yeah...I feel like I owe my life to this...you know, to the Buszy and to Milton Keynes and to skateboarding and to the people that I grew up skateboarding with, like you guys, because if I didn't skate I wouldn't have probably got a camera in the first place and I wouldn't have had a reason to film anything. Maybe it might have happened, but I think it's pretty unlikely.

Just skating here...I think it just shaped my life and even like as a filmmaker now, like twenty years later, the way I do things is not, probably, the traditional way in terms of filmmaking. Like when I'm on a big job and I turn up with a skateboard because I know that I can get a certain shot with...people look at me like I'm fucking crazy because they're just like, 'Why is this guy that we're paying all this money...why has he got his skateboard?' And they're all tripping out and they're worried about insurance because it's not normal to them and it's just like its everyday to me.

And I think those things...things have like...they help me, like now, to, kind of, have maybe...I think those things help me like have something different about me as a filmmaker. Do you want me to do that again?

Yeah, maybe...

It was really good though. That was really good stuff.

Shit!

You were just catching it there at the end.

Yeah. These are like super noises...so, the whole thing?

You just tell us about bringing the skateboard on set. The other part was fine.

Yeah, like ... how can I just jump into that?

So what's different about you as a filmmaker compared to other guys on set?

Yeah, I think that having grown up filming skateboarding here and just filming skateboarding being the basis of me learning how to use a camera and filmmaking in general, that has kind of given me something that a lot of filmmakers don't necessarily have. When I'm on set and I'm hired to shoot a commercial or a music video and I'm head of department so I have to...I've

got a big, like, responsibility and people expect a lot of me and I've got to manage a lighting team and a camera team and I turn up with a skateboard...like, people are just like, 'What? What the fuck is this guy...why's he got a skateboard?' And then, when I use the skateboard in the way that I...it's completely normal to me to be following someone along on a skateboard...but when the producers or directors look and, like, 'Hang on. This is fucked up. This is dangerous as well,' because they're just thinking about the money. Like if he drops that camera but to me I don't think anything of it. It's like it's normal to me and I think that's given me, like, a slight edge or at least it's given me something unique as a filmmaker compared to other people, particularly as I didn't go to film school.

I didn't learn in the traditional way. Even now, if I buy a new camera or I've got a new lens and I live in London so I've got a lot of places I can go and test stuff out, I'll still come to the Buszy because I know all my friends will be there. I know they'll skate. This is, like, fifteen/twenty years of me pointing a camera. You know, first hand, pointing a camera at your face and you don't even know what I'm doing. Everyone just lets me do it and I owe my career, basically, to the Buszy and to my friends that I grew up skateboarding with. Yeah. I don't know, is that...?

So leading on from that is something that's always fascinated me and about filming skateboarding is the fact that someone's willing to put £700 three foot away from a skateboarder flying around here...hitting Box...

Were you hit, Box?

No, I mean...but it's something that's always fascinated me. You basically went into it then and saying on set you were willing to bring skateboarding role...that's something that's always fascinated me. Did you ever, at first, ever feel really hesitant about having something expensive and then putting it so close and being worried about that aspect of it?

0:20:27

As in like...when it was...

When you filmed skateboarding...

Before it was a job?

Skateboarding, yeah...for example, you'd get a death lens, that was £300 on its own...so, maybe, just word it like...don't know. Try and describe the...

Any stories of like the first time someone hit your lens or board and, like...

Yeah. You know, I've been quite lucky with that actually, to be fair. How can I word this? I guess some people...no, hang on. This is actually quite a difficult one to, like, get into. Once I'm in, I'll be in. It's just to get going...I don't think filming skateboarding in the way...the traditional way to film skateboarding,

holding this £500/600/700 camera two feet away from a skateboard...it is dangerous and probably does void any insurance if you had it but, as a kid, I don't give a shit about insurance. I didn't even know what that was and it just seemed...I never questioned it because we grew up watching skate videos so it's just like...that's just how you film. You don't...how else do you do it?

Now, all this time later, I can think of a million ways to film skateboarding and I kind of want to because I want to make it look different but, back then, it's just like, 'Yeah, you just get the camera and get as close as you can to the guy skating and you just follow them around.' You have to, kind of, keep one eye on what they're doing and one eye on where you're going and look out for cracks and stones and everything else but I never...it is sketchy. It's definitely sketchy but I never questioned it. I never thought this is weird. I'm just like, 'How else you gonna do it?' How's that?

Perfect. What I was going to ask then was how has your style of filming skateboarding changed from filming in Milton Keynes?

Ok. This is...I want to make sure that I don't say...

Maybe mention like industry influence? Like you were saying you just see it in the videos. Is there any kind of stuff that you've seen specifically...I don't know...Ty Evans was using dollies and stuff like that and that definitely inspired you? I've seen you messing around with stuff like that. So is there any, like, inspirational...

You might say what video made you think, 'I want to start doing it differently, where I'm not right up a face,' What made you change your techniques?

Because there's an artistic...

And what are they...

There's an artistic value to getting the proper long-lens as opposed to just following someone with...

Yes, things like how did your filming progress?

That's a good question actually. Fucking hell. That's a good question. Can we come back to that?

Yeah, you can think on that. You can say, 'my filming progressed by then ... video...

Because that's style development. I mean...

Yeah, because I don't know if it's, like, intentional or whether it's just like something that happened. I can say a little bit actually.

Go on, let's hear it. Go for it...

So, I mean, the traditional way to film skateboarding is with a death lens which, if you've ever watched a skate film, it's super-wide, distorted...the edges of the frame are all bent and it allows you to get super close to the camera...it allows you to get super close to the skateboarder and it makes everything look bigger and that's kind of what I would consider the traditional way to film skateboarding. For me, as time went on, like it's great to film like that but I want to see something different so I would try and take inspiration from other films. That's fucking lame.

No, no. That's perfect.

You think? It's just a bit vague. Exactly, it's a bit vague.

...examples of watching a certain skate video or...

What year was it?

Is (unclear) film different? You are like Fully Flared? Was that further out or... I don't know.

Yeah. I don't want to hype Ty Evans too much. Yeah, probably...well, yeah, it's not right even though that was the first one. Fully flared, probably.

Because I remember... (unclear)... that influence. It was a VX, I think. It was about that time when you first got your VX 1000...the staple skate setup...

Yes, let's hear that.

0:25:06

So, to talk about...

Just want inspired you to get a VX 1000... (unclear)...industry standard, sort of thing...

Yeah. I mean, the industry standard...I don't know if that's the right term because it's not...there's no...there's not an industry standard.

The most common or...

The most common way to film skateboarding is so narrow and so niche because no other...no other video's actions...sports videos...are shot the way...it's a bit different now but back then everything was shot on pretty much the same camera and the same lens. It was a death lens and Sony VX 1000. They're dogshit cameras. Like, they're not good cameras and people still buy them now to film skateboarding. That's how, like, important that look is to people, that twenty years later you can buy a better camera and a better lens for the same money but they still want to have this, like, traditional, authentic skate look, like just soft, barely...you can barely make out who the people are

sometimes. Like if they're going fast, like you don't really know who the fuck it is.

But that's like...that's the look. When I started watching Baker 3 and Beagle was...because that's...was it Beagle? Yeah, it is Beagle, in it? Yeah...when I started watching...when Baker 3 came out that's when I was like, 'I need it to look like this. I can't keep making them on this kind of half-pseudo skate film, looking...' I'm just gonna get that camera and that lens and its right. And then, as time went on, I was like I don't want it to look...I don't want it to look like the traditional thing. I want it to look different, I want it to look my...I want it to be my vision of how skateboarding can be shown. Starting to sound...starting to sound a bit pretentious.

Which video then, that you made, started to show you that progression kick in? Get to know...

Was it reactionary to watching back your first?

What would be really good, like someone like me, I don't know anything about Carter so it would be really good to know what films he has made and what films are shown... (unclear – all talking at once) and then you can go into detail...otherwise if you start talking about a film I won't know if it's yours... showing films in Milton Keynes because it's...really you're the only filmmaker we're...we've got you and Lindsay. Lindsay's a different generation...

What's he done in the last fifteen years? (Unclear) Lindsay...

That's recorded.

You can keep that (unclear)...

Can you just tell us, like, a few videos that you made and then, maybe, how they progressed as you went...?

So, let me think. I first started making skate edits before I made a film and I put them on YouTube. No, they weren't on YouTube. They went on something different. Is that...no, that's important. Because they're on...well, because YouTube was so new, like it ... I don't know. I'll just...no, don't worry...

We'll restart that bit. (Unclear).

Shall I...? No, problem, cool. I first started making skate edits before I made a Full-length film. I maybe did, like, three or four...yeah, probably like five/six. One of them was maybe, like, twenty minutes long. They were pretty long. I wouldn't do that now for just an edit on-line. So I did, like, maybe three/four... maybe five...of those. And then I made a full-length skate film, which is the EGC video, which was 2000...is the year important? Is that important? Yeah, ok, I'll just go...

I first made a full-length skate film called 'The EGC Video', which was just awful because the whole process of that is...I mean, the skating's good. I'm not gonna knock that. The skating's rad. Like it's my friends, who I think are the best skateboarders because they're my friends and I see how hard they work for stuff and I feel like I experienced their, kind of, struggles getting that experience.

I was with them and I filmed and I like to document it but, as a film, it sucks. I didn't know anything about how to expose properly. I didn't know any...the kind of technical knowledge. I didn't know that, I was just learning. Learning on the job basically. Then, a few years later, I got a better camera and I, kind of, started to really...the first part of that ... the first part of the film is fine. I just want to...

When you got your second camera, maybe...

0:30:00

Yeah, because it was two different cameras.

So you went from the 1 to the 21, right?

It was the other way round. So I got the better, newer camera and then I was like, 'No, I want this cool thing.' So I bought the shit camera.

Tell us about that.

Ok. So after I made that first film, which was on a pretty decent camera with a good lens, I wanted that classic, like, the proper skate film look so bad that I sold that and I got an older camera and the lens is good...but an older...worse camera basically, to make what I thought would be a better film. And it was a better film and I...you could kind of tell that I was lining things of graphics so people's low rows were better and the editing is better, I think, in my opinion but there's still like...when I look at now, I like to watch it but there is still so much is awful. Like, there's still a lot of skating now and I make edits and films, I want to show more of the personality of the person and the character and so it's just not constantly skateboarding.

Could you tell us the name of that video?

Oh, fucking hell! The most basic thing. Yeah, the second film I made was called 'Get to Know'. Actually something I do want to say about that... something I do want to say about 'Get To Know', which I feel like, at the time, no one was really doing, is that video was...I put that on-line to download for free, which sounds...that's what every film now is like. Every skate film like that is on-line, you can download it for free.

So, that's eleven years ago. I'm just saying that I did that eleven years ago because I didn't really care about trying to sell. Everyone was selling DVDs and it was easy enough to do that but I didn't...I just wanted people to see

what Milton Keynes had to offer in the spots and the skaters. I didn't care about trying to make anything from it. Until this day I've never made a penny from skateboarding. So don't think you can make a living from skateboarding.

I've gone on the USB today, to get to know how to pull it.

Have you?

Yeah.

Oh, shit. How about that?

Can you talk a little bit about the premieres? I know there was a premiere for the EGC video and there was an even bigger one for the 'Get To Know' film. Can you talk about...?

Yeah, yeah. So both of those films were premiered at The Xscape. Do I need to reference what that is?

Yeah, you can say...it will be easier to get to know...

Ok. So both of the skate films had a premiere at the same place. That's dumb. Both of those films had a premiere at a...I need to...this is fucking difficult. It's so hard to like...

You could say it premiered in Milton Keynes at...that's fine, because, at least, we know the premiere's Milton Keynes and not London.

It's a point of reference.

Ok, ok, ok. Yeah, alright. Both of those films I had premieres for and they got...sequentially they got more...both of those films got premiered...no, hang on. That's not good, that's not good. I premiered both of those films...look at this guy, he's killing me.

I'm trying not to laugh out loud.

No, no. It's fine, just get it out there. You gotta get it out. If you hold it in I'm not gonna be able to, like, talk to you.

I think, however, because...

It doesn't matter how you say it exactly...you just talk about...

It's good to reference Milton Keynes though.

Yes, reference Milton Keynes and just start talking about the actual premieres.

Yeah, ok. So, both of those films had premieres in Milton Keynes and the first one was pretty good. I think, maybe, we had like two hundred people and then the second one was five hundred people, apparently. I don't know if that's true. Are you interviewing Snoosher? No, no. Ok. Fuck it, I won't go there.

Both of those films got premiered. The first one had about two...I think it was about two hundred people. The second one, I was told, had five hundred people but I can't confirm that but I was told it had five hundred people. I was hype because people were coming from outside of Milton Keynes which, to me, was like...that was harsh. The reason for making the film in the first place is I wanted people outside of Milton Keynes to see this film and to see how good the skaters were, not including myself, because I was in there and I'm not bigging up myself like that. I don't know what else I can say about the premiere. I could talk about, briefly, how it got reviewed in 'Sidewalk'.
Definitely.

And then also, both of those films got reviewed in 'Sidewalk', which, at the time was like the biggest...and probably the only British skateboard magazine so that was a big deal, to be able to have it...

0:35:04

That's right. Both of those films got premiered...fucking hell! Ah, my God! I feel awful that I do this to people every fucking...the amount of interviews I've done with people. I think it's because I'm...when I do them I'm thinking of the edit because I know how annoying it is.

It'll be fine.

Moss is gonna love it.

Yeah, sorry man. Cutting out so...

Sat in on it so he knows what happens...

Some old lady volunteer is gonna transcribe this...she's gonna have a field day.

It's my aunt...

Damn. You can get transcribing software that will do it pretty accurately.

(Unclear – general discussion re transcribing)

I know that the films got reviewed in 'Sidewalk'. Can you tell us how that made you feel or what the process was?

It was...so both of the films got reviewed in 'Sidewalk', which was, at the time, the biggest and I think the only British skateboard magazine. That was cool because I liked the idea that the best magazine was willing to talk about

Milton Keynes skateboarding. What I'm not happy about is I told Ben Powell not to credit me as a filmmaker, which is the dumbest thing I could have ever done but...I told him not to do that because I wanted to be considered as a skateboarder and not a filmmaker. Now I wish I did that the other way round.

Could you tell us that again? Because ... the car sound ... an awful car sound.

That's a really (unclear) story ...

Is that worth putting in?

Brilliant.

It's fucking true as well. The second one doesn't talk about who made it at all. Where shall I pick up? Shall I just do the whole thing?

Yeah, just do it again.

So, both of those films got premiered in 'Sidewalk' magazine, which, at the time, was the biggest...I'm pretty sure it was the only skate magazine in the UK. And that was cool because I felt like we and I had done something...we'd created something worthy for that magazine to want to share and talk about it.

One thing I'm not too hyped on is that I told Ben Powell, the editor, not to credit me as a filmmaker because, at the time, I foolishly thought I could go somewhere with skateboarding so I just left that off and now it kills me because I was never gonna make a living skateboarding. Is that alright?

During the filming of 'Get to Know', I filmed you a little bit ... there was a couple of other people who, like...

Do you want to talk about the process?

Was it a struggle for you? Like being...I know how much of a perfectionist you are when it comes to filming and framing and...was it hard to be behind the lens and then look at the footage back and go, 'Oh, that'll just have to do.'? Was there any specific moments? I don't care if you call anyone out...

It would be really nice to talk about everyone else filming it.

Talk about the process.

(Unclear – all talking at once)

The process between the two videos were a little bit different. The first video...it was, kind of like, no one really knew what we were doing. We all just had just one or two cameras and they would just get passed around and you just film whatever and like if someone landed the trick and you got it and they were in there somewhere, that's all that mattered.

Then with the second one it, kind of, was established that I was the filmer, which was probably not that cool but I was...usually the shittiest person is the filmer. That's why they film because they can't skate but I wanted to have a part so, in the second one, I was still the main filmer but I wanted to get footage in it and I wanted to have a part.

So other people would film me and I was eternally grateful for that but it was always a big killer because, without sounding like a dick, I was better at filming purely because I did it so much and everyone else is skating. So, like, I would film people and their stuff would look ok...I don't want to say good, I'm not that arrogant but I would film...I would film everyone and then get tricks and it would look ok. And then I'd always be, like, when someone's filming me, like with the fisheye for example...'Oh, it's too far away. You need to get closer.' So that was a bit of a let down but my part sucked anyway so you don't need to worry about that.

Is that why you had the static shot of doing the pot shot, one foot land ...?
Yeah.

Did you want to cover yourself?

Yeah. No, well, that's terrible actually. I can talk about that. The thing is I'll end up just...it'll all be really self-deprecating because that's just, kind of, the person I am.

0:39:55

So, I mean, one thing I tried to do in the second film was show a bit more of people's character and their personality and we had, kind of...there was little intro shots and I thought I was really cool and arty by filming myself doing a front shove and it's really, like, straight, like symmetrical centred frame doing this really forced posing front shove but it just looked...there's a massive bin in the frame. There's like a Dumpster, like...this is what I mean. I would never do that. Fifteen years later I would never do that but that's what I mean. I owe that to skateboarding because I would never have learnt these things if I didn't do that. I don't know if you can fucking use that.

No, that's absolutely fine. Talk exactly about the progression we...

Ok, cool.

It's like you're saying because it's when you go back and you look at it and you think, 'Oh, my God! What was I doing?' But then that's, like, perfect because now you have that experience. It's kind of like you've looked back on it and you...because you said you're, like, not a professionally educated filmer so what it is you've just learnt as you've gone along and you've got kind of the know how to realise when something was bad that you've done and how to improve on that.

Yeah, for sure.

I'm going to put that into a question. So has making these films...did it make you realise some mistakes you were making or stuff that was kind of glaring that you didn't pick up during the process. It didn't come until it was actually put together as a film or the editing process.

Yeah, helped you improve.

Yeah, did it help you improve?

Making...yeah, making skate films or even just making edits like consistently, definitely helped me improve as a filmmaker, probably unintentionally because...I still think now the best way to learn...to learn anything...is to learn by doing and by doing you make mistakes. So I'm...I have, like, pretty much twenty years of mistakes. And, even now, I'll film something...like it'll be a job I'm being paid to do and I'll look at it and I'll be like, 'Fuck, I should have done that differently.' And it's just the same but I was lucky that I always had someone to film. I always had someone to make these mistakes with and if I did...maybe I didn't even press record sometimes, which happened or someone would land a trick and I'm just, like, not paying attention. Just simple stuff like that. I don't think you get that kind of leeway or flexibility. If you go to film school you don't get that. It's a lot more formulaic. So I think the way I learned is, probably...hang on. I have something I want to say here that's, like...I say a lot in conversations with people so I want to make sure I get it right because I'll just say this to you guys now before...really? You want me to try.

So, for a long time, when I was, kind of, trying to transition into getting paid work as a filmmaker and still filming skateboarding, there was this, like, anxiety that I couldn't really do it because I didn't go to film school. For a long time I thought that was, like, you have...if you're gonna be a filmmaker and you make a living, making videos of people, you have to go to film school and you have to spend whatever...thirty grand a year or however much it is, like, learning to do things properly.

Now, all these years later, I'm kind of glad the way I learnt because I could learn at my own pace. There's a lot less consequence if I did fuck up and I'm not in debt. I'm not in all that debt. I mean, I'm in debt because I have an expensive camera now but I'm not paying off a student loan but, yeah...I don't know. That was like...that was something I was really, like...

That's kind of...in my mind that's kind of the angle for interviewing you is that raising...a lot of the time, because we're just doing it to random people. It's kind of proving that you can just be a little street rad kid filming and now you're a paid professional that has adverts on television.

Yeah.

And we quite get to know about some of the stuff you're doing now so that we can make...

It's worth capturing that and then being, like, any of your favourite, tricky films...

I think we've covered the progress stuff. I think now I'd like to, kind of...could you describe to me the first paid job from filming?

Yeah. So, the first time I got paid to do a job was some, like, summer fun festival thing in Northampton, where there's just like a kid's performance and then there's some local band and, you know, just like a little summer festival thing. That was the first thing I shot that I got paid for. And I used the same camera that I was filming skateboarding with. Nothing was really different. It was just I was just pointing the camera at something different.

0:45:02

But the thing is...I don't know if this is...I'll keep talking to you, even though I'm just talking out loud now...because I put my career...I put...because I stopped filmmaking. I stopped. I sold the camera and, for a good few years, didn't do anything. I was just like a bit of a loser and was partying and chasing girls and just being a guy and it wasn't the best use of time. So, I kind of...I don't whether to say it...like frame it so that it's like...yeah, I've just made this journey from one to the other.

You can just say you stopped filming. You don't have to give us...

But I really regret that.

Tell us what you're comfortable...

Tell us that you regret it. (Unclear) first paid job...

I'll give you the footage if I can find it. Actually, that paid job...so it was a day...it was a day to night shoot. So there was stuff happening in the day and then there was like the metal grebo bands in the evening, at night. And there's...I'm filming this terrible band. They got like...they had long hair and they're playing like awful heavy metal and in the sky there's a UFO. I swear to god it's a UFO. You guys can have the footage. There's a UFO in the background and I didn't know until I got the footage home on my computer and I swear to god it's a UFO. It has nothing to do with this project but, honestly, there's a UFO in the footage. (Laughs).

So how did you get from that small job to ... what kind of stuff are you making now? How did you get...?

I guess you need to get from...

I know that you spent a lot of time actually filming snowboarding. That was a big transition for you...travelling and filming...

Yeah, that's actually quite...the snowboarding thing was quite...yeah, it's quite important actually. Just need to figure out how to say it. Because when ...although I've never made any money filming skateboarding, I quickly was able to make a little bit of money from snowboarding. One of the reasons for that is because I have friends that are professional snowboarders and they knew that I filmed skateboarding. And they like skateboarding and they knew that skateboard film aesthetic. They knew the wide fisheye thing, super low angle and, at the time, there wasn't in the UK...there wasn't anyone filming snowboarding so I had this like...I don't know if it's a niche but I had this selling point and then I quickly started filming a lot of snowboarding.

And then those little...they were in snow domes so they were still in the UK but that kind of grew quickly and then I was travelling all around Europe filming snowboarding and that would not have happened if I hadn't filmed skateboarding. And that probably wouldn't have happened if I had not filmed skateboarding the way I filmed it. So, I owe a lot...do you know what I mean? I owe so...like everything I do, as a filmmaker, I owe it back to skateboarding and you guys...like filming my friends and growing up skateboarding.

It's kind of like that raw aesthetic. What you're trying to describe is getting in close and people like...coming up super slow and it's like (unclear) on again, it looks like (unclear) slow. I haven't watched a lot of snowboarding videos but from what you've described it's...angle, basically. It's finding something fresh.

Yeah, exactly because in...it's a lot more common now but, at the time, in snowboarding, the few people that I filmed, they were...we would travel to, like, Helsinki in the middle of winter but they wouldn't be on a mountain, they'd be in the street. They're basically doing skate tricks on handrails but on snowboards. So that's why I was desirable to them as a filmmaker because I could film exactly the same. It's just on snowboards and it's easier because it's strapped to their feet. They just want to be skateboarders but they, you know...they don't want to put in the effort so they strap it to their feet. But, yeah...thank you snowboarding (a little bit).

Do you want me to talk about how I got from that to...?

(Unclear) ... that was going to be my next question...

Was how I got into...?

Because, obviously, that was like chipping at bits of money and a bit of travelling. I mean, that's desirable on your portfolio. Do you think that helped?

Yeah, I dunno. At the time I thought that helped but...I don't know, man. This is a tricky one. I mean, I can frame this and make it sound like that or I can tell the truth.

What do you think? Tell us what you think.

I mean, having these snowboard films on my website to, like, show that I'm a filmmaker. It did help me get more work but really the way I transitioned into doing it as a full-time job was shooting music videos for people, which now everyone does, but back then it wasn't as common or as accessible so I'd shoot music videos for people and then that would lead on to the next job and I've have a bit more money and a bit more budget and then that job would look a little bit better and then I'd get a better camera and equipment and it just, kind of, builds up and builds up.

0:50:19

And that's still how it works now. It's just that there's a lot more money on the line. Do you want me to talk about what I'm actually...like, what I...

Yeah, current jobs.

So, from being a filmmaker...I say filmmaker because that's kind of when I say...when I think of a filmmaker it's someone...you film, you edit, you direct. You do the whole package. Now, as time's gone on, I don't do...I just...I'm a cinematographer so I only handle the photography of the job. I don't direct, I don't edit. I don't do anything like that. Yeah, I mean...again, this is why I keep saying I owe my life to skateboarding because the places that I've been...like, I've been to South America, I've been...it sounds a bit lame, don't it? Just saying South America. I've travelled all over the world. People have paid me to film stuff all over the world and I've been to places I would never...I would never pay to go there myself because they're, kind of, just not on my radar.

People pay me to do that, which is...still, it's like now, I'm just, it's kind of overwhelming but had I not skateboarded and not filmed my friends none of this...I don't think any of this would happen. And, yeah, now I'm like...I have this fake job that doesn't really need to exist. Like, I don't save lives, do you know what I mean? I make music videos for people. I sell pot noodle commercials, do you know what I mean? Like I'm not changing lives, I'm just selling products for people. I love it, I don't want to do anything else. Had I not filmed my friends skateboarding that wouldn't...I don't think it ever would have happened.

And I still film skateboarding now. I don't get paid for it but it's still my favourite thing to film because I can come here and my friends...I can come to Milton Keynes. I know that there's gonna be some of my friends. There's gonna be someone here that I can film and that's happy for me to film them. There's no client telling me how to frame and telling me what lens to use and telling me the look. This is me. I can just do...I can shoot it how I want. I can...again, I can experiment. I can make mistakes but they're my mistakes and it's on me, so there's not...I can still learn and I don't think...I don't think that's ever gonna change. I think I'll still do that. Next week I'll be filming at the Buszy. Next week...you need the date, right? The twenty...oh, fucking hell.

The only other question I had was just, like, any favourite shots, like favourite tricks that you'd filmed or saw go down on any...

Some of your greatest hits.

I know you've described...talked a little about pressing the cord...

Regards filming...

(Unclear) tricks. I mean, everyone's done that ... your favourite thing you've filmed and then, towards the end, you can tell us some...

Yeah, one thing I would like to at least say...yeah, one thing. With filming skateboarding in Milton Keynes and making these videos, one thing that's kind of...I guess it's kind of good and bad. When I'm actually looking through the lens, like when I'm looking through the camera, I don't really appreciate the trick at the time because I'm concentrating on...I'm always concentrating on making sure I get it and, obviously, when they land it and I stop...I press stop and I'm not recording it. I'm gonna give them pound and, you like, give them their props but I'm not really...I don't appreciate it like everybody else who's watching because they're seeing it first-hand and I'm seeing it through, which kind of sucks but the fact that I get to document these things and I have it there forever and they have it there forever, like that's kind of cool I think.

But there's a lot of stuff, like...when I look back at videos...yeah, there's a lot of stuff that...a lot of shots and tricks that you get to know for example. Like now, even when I look back at them, I don't really remember filming them. Like a lot of it, I just don't remember but when I watch the trick I'm still like, 'That's fucking sick.' Like that's so cool and it's there. It's like on the...that's the thing. If you put something on the Internet it's out in the world forever, whether it's good or bad.

Trying to think of things that were really cool to film.

Can you give us any particular examples?

Yeah, what's the best? Then you guys are gonna ask for the footage. That's the problem. My day rate's pretty high. Fuck what...I don't want it to be at the Buszy, that's the thing.

Or a person that was great to film?

0:55:01

I mean, I guess everyone...are other people talking about Sean, in any way?

Yeah.

I guess he's like the fucking holy golden child, isn't he? Yeah, pretty much you can...back then it was like you point the camera at Sean and you're gonna get

gold. Now it's James Bush. You could just film him on an average day and he just gets like...it's just fire. But, yeah, back then when I was filming more consistently and everybody was...sorry, moved my legs a bit...back then, making those films, filming Sean was...everyone put in effort but you could tell, like, even now stuff just comes a little bit easier to Sean and that stuff becomes easier to Sean...is infinitely better than what comes difficult to us. So it was always good to film him.

But he's a prime example. Like I'd film Sean...even someone as good as Sean, I would film him and it's not until I get the footage home that I'm like, 'That's fucking amazing.' You know what I mean? Like, whereas if you're watching it first-hand, you get to experience of 'Yeah, that's pretty crazy.'

The kind of spots you're talking about...this Buszy...brown (unclear)...beige...any of those, like the double set or (unclear)...what did they call it?

Holiday Inn...Station Plaza...Station Square...

Anywhere, any particular trick was amazing to get...

There's...I don't know why it's sticking in my head but there's one shot of Sean that always...it's just sticking in my head now. I don't really know why but it's on the Theatre Ledge of the Buszy. There's a Switch Heel flip...Switch Manny...you know that ledge, right? The Switch Heelflip, Switch Manny is a good trick but when you do it on a ledge that's waxy as fuck and, like, that much wider than your board there's like...it's ridiculous. That's probably one of my...it seems to stick in my head. I don't know why. I'm sure he's got endless amounts of stuff. That was cool.

Actually, something that's good to film that I always think about is whenever like a team would come through and the first time was when the Osiris team came down and I had my shitty camera then. And I have that footage somewhere. Josh Kasper...can we talk about Josh Kasper? But I don't know if this is like...

This is perfect.

Will you context if it's not talking to skateboarders. So, probably, I think that was like 2000. The biggest, kind of, Skate Company was a shoe company called Osiris and it was like September, maybe October. It's pretty fucking cold and this massive rock star tour van comes up with, like, Osiris caked over the side. And we are all just like this...this is fucking weird. Why are these guys here? Yeah, I filmed them. They didn't know I was filming. I was, like, secret filming them but I was a kid. Whatever, I'm gonna film them. But having that footage is quite cool.

And some of that footage went in their video. I think they made, like a tour video. And that was cool seeing...I think whenever you see pros in skate Milton Keynes in a big video, I think that's, like, it's always kind of special. And

when it's at the Buszy it's even more so because that's...that's our home, you know what I mean? We spent thousands of hours there. I mean, you see the best skaters in the world, that you grow up watching and you watch them on these videos and then you see them in your spots, it's always just like, 'Wow.'

And you soon realise how good they actually are, when you see them skate in person. So then I get the best of both worlds, because I see them skating past and then I get to film them, secretly, like a little grom.

Do you remember a trick that you filmed with this guy?

One thing was pretty crazy, was watching Josh...can't even say his name...one thing that was pretty mad was watching Josh Kasper skate. At the time he was like...like you're fucking Michael Jordan of jumping down stairs. He was, like, cool...he was the most coolest...he's not now and, looking back, he's probably a bit of a douche but then he was like the coolest guy and he would just throw himself down the biggest stairs and there's a double set at the Jury's Inn, which is like the roughest floor. They're just terrible stairs and he just would fly down it so easily. Saying that I don't know if I have the footage of it.

He ollied them and he spent ages trying to 360 flip it. But those stairs are massive, like, to the point where it's not a spot. You know, as long as it's that big, it's not a skateboard ledge...don't skate it...but he was fucking doing it. How's that? Is that alright?

So it's a different set? The Jury's Inn set than the other double set?

The Holiday Inn?

No, that was (unclear...

Is that the same...?

Is that Jury's Inn? No, it's not Jury's Inn, is it? It's Holiday Inn, you're right.

Do you want to rerun that because I was getting confused there?

Yeah, sorry.

I'm from Milton Keynes...

1:00:02

Yeah, shit! Holiday Inn. Wait, what is it? Is it Jury's...its Holiday Inn, yeah?

Holiday Inn.

Jury's Inn is the one where the...

Yeah, I was trying to think of where you meant.

Yeah, sorry.

Just rerun it with the correct name.

You're gonna do it better.

I'll try, I'll try. Yeah, one of the craziest things that I watched as a kid was when Josh Kasper was trying to...he tried a bunch of stuff down the double-set at the Holiday Inn, which are like...I think it's like a five and a five and then rough and then run up this road like brick road. It's just the shit set. There's a reason no one skates it but watching him just ollieing them like nothing was pretty mad. That's kind of it really. I just got the name wrong.

We can always cut and you saying Holiday Inn and put it where it says Jury's Inn.

Jury's Inn.

(Unclear) did that, didn't he?

He was the first one and Joe jumped it the same day as Ben Grove.

Oh, yeah. Actually, that makes it sound shit then, don't it? If UK people have done it.

Ben Grove was there for about two hours trying it and Joe (unclear)...

So if you see Josh Kasper come and do it like nothing, that's different. That's cool.

Yeah, you know what, is Joe gonna be in this because I'd like to talk about watching him skate? Because he's actually...

...that'd be great...

(Unclear) be interviewed, maybe if we continue...

(Unclear)...his name's come up but no one's really linked into it. He only just came up.

Yeah, talk about Joe then.

Joe...like second to Sean. One of my favourite people to watch and to film is Joe Nobes. I always said he was like one of my favourite British skateboarders and, even now, he doesn't really skate that much but when he does skate he's just like maximum effort. Like no warm-up, just he decides he's gonna try something, he's just like, 'I'm fucking going for it.' And, somehow, he'll just do it. He's always good to film. Why did he do...?

I didn't film it. One of my favourite things is that Switch Flip Tailslide over the gap. You know, the marble ledge? The funny story is that Rob Selley wanted to do that apparently and he was there and Joe had just fucking turned up and did it and Joe can't even do a Switch Flip Tailslide but he did it.

Could you tell us where that gap is? I don't know where that...

It's literally...just...you know the one. It's like .a...

Is it (unclear).

Yeah, yeah.

It is just (unclear) up.

Yeah, so the spot is like classic Milton Keynes. Narrow, marble ledge, like down a hill and then there's a gap of about a metre and a half for you to kind of walk up the stairs and then the ledge again and he does gap, Switch Flip, Tailslide (unclear)...he does gap, Switch Flip, Tailslide on this...on that thing and, like, nobody can skate...I don't know how people ended up there that day because no one skates those gaps really and he...Joe can't do Switch Flip Tailslides but he decided he wanted to do it and he fucking did it. It looked amazing.

Oh, man. There's so much good...there's like so much good skateboarding's gone down in Milton Keynes. You could never really say one trick...

That was perfect. We got it without you interrupting.

When you say you can't narrow it down to one trick but is there one thing...I mean, I know for me, Sean's Switch Flip Back Tail (unclear)...me, I still get emotional thinking about...

Yeah, yeah.

I was talking about that earlier.

I mean, for me...like you say the Switch...the Manual Switch...that to me...my memories are of just Sean killing it.

But, you know what, though. Saying that, as much as I like filming and watching Sean, I think what I appreciate more about all the people that have let me film them, but mostly my friends, is like when they have to work for it. Like when there's a real battle and someone just gets it done. That to me is always more impressive. Not more impressive but I appreciate it more. Like Sean's fucking sick but he's been given that. Do you know what I mean? He...him and James Bush, like there's something in them. They're just at that level already and they put in the effort and they go even further, whereas like, us normal folk we have to work hard to just do like simple shit. When people

really put in the effort and they get hurt or they break a board and then they go back and get the trick. I appreciate that more.

Prime example is...and get to know...Troy's last trick. He did a Shove It Heelflip, down the eight set...you know, with the horrible yellow...he breaks his board and Dowds gives him a board and then he does it, and it's like the best Shove It Heelflip ever. He did it on someone else's board and it was fucking freezing and everyone's just out of frame, like watching him and it's just like that's the best shit, man. Yeah!

...That is like the essence of filming skateboarding. The emotional battle, the physical battle...

1:05:41

End of Interview

Transcribed by Stephen Flinn (July, 2019)