

Name: Mark Calape
Date of Birth: 1985
Place of Birth: London
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Interviewed by: ROGER KITCHEN
Duration: (00:22:33)

My name is Roger Kitchen and this is for the MK Skate Project. And I'm talking to... your name is?

My name is Mark Calape aka Swarf.

I saw that. Where does that nickname come from?

It came from the school of where... my nickname Swarf came from the school of where my skate mates all met, which is Lord Grey School and it was during a design technology class and we was making screws and all these little chippings of metal would come out and then they was called swarfs and then they would, like, cut us. And I kind of thought, 'Yeah, I kinda like that nickname.' I was quite witty at the time. I was the shortest kid in the whole school so it was like, 'Yeah, I think I'll use that as a nickname.' And it's stuck with me ever since.

So it was your choice, not someone else's?

No, no, no. Yeah, yeah. All purely my choice.

Ok. When were you born?

I was born in 1985.

And where?

I was born in London... Westminster Hospital.

So how did you come to be in Milton Keynes and when did you get here?

I got to Milton Keynes because my mother and father wanted to... actually, no. It was my father. He was working for the Milton Keynes Council and the Council granted us a council house. So that's how we ended up in Milton

Keynes.

And what year are we talking about?

It's a complicated answer. So we got here in 1985 but then my mum and father were going through a divorce so I grew up in London, from 1985 to 1990 and then moved to Milton Keynes in 1990.
So you were about five years old when you...

Yeah, I was five years old when I moved to Milton Keynes.

Growing up in Bletchley, how did you get involved in skateboarding?

So I got involved in skateboarding through my dad. We was driving through the train station and I just saw all these guys just jumping over crates and my dad was a guy who, like, knew everything so I asked him, "How do you make the board jump?" and he was like, "Oh, you've just got to look at the target and just jump with the board." And I was just ... that answer was so vague and then I would just like, 'I wanna get a skateboard. I want to see my dad do this.'

And it was something my dad couldn't do. He could say that he could but then, when it came down to the practicalities of showing me he couldn't do it so then me and my cousin got... he got a board as well and we took a... he just lived in Loughton, so we just biked up to the train station and then that was it. Got stuck there!

And this is in the main square, was it?

In the Station Square, yeah.

How old were you then?

So that was Year 5, so I was about nine to ten years old.

And when you did this were you amongst the younger set? Were there kids younger than you or were they mostly a lot older than you?

Everyone at the station, at the time, was older. It was only me and my cousin that were the younger ones. And then, as soon as I got there, I, like, smashed my head pretty severely and then all the older lot came over and were seeing if I was ok and then, yeah... because there wasn't much young kids at all. There was only just me and my cousin. Everyone else was, like, teens. I don't know. When you're young you just think everyone is an adult, even if they are teenagers you just think, 'Ah, it's the bigger boys.'

So when would you do this? At the weekend, after school?

It was during the summer holiday because my cousin's from London and we liked to spend time together so it was during the summer of... I'd like to say around '97/'98, one of those two years.

And that's how you really got started with it. Did you continue to go to the station or were you now doing stuff in Bletchley as well?

Yeah. So when my cousin left for London I was just stuck on a skateboard but then my friends from school... it was Wellsmead at the time... like Paul Norris, the twins, Lewis and David Mclean and Luke Webb. We all had a common interest in other things and then, with the skateboard, we all kind of like ... they had older brothers that did it and then they thought that we should all do it together. And then we all started doing it right outside my house for about ... I'd say about eight years, just us. Just in the front of our house. Got home videos of us just causing havoc at the front of our street. Even inside our house, doing stuff like prank cause. It was just like a really... oh, a free kid's life. Like we was really just crafting our path in this street called Dorset Close.

And then we would even have little competitions because we couldn't just get up to the station all the time. We could only go there on the weekends but, on the weekdays after school, that's what we were pretty much doing. Just skating our Grind Box after school, in the front of the house.

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Explain to me 'Skating our Grind Box.' What does that mean?

My stepfather, he built this box with a metal casing on the edge and that's all we needed. So we had like a kerb that was in front of my house but then we had the addition, that came a few years later, which was a box that we could do tricks on and just grind on it like how you would grind on the marble but it was just a wooden box with a metal casing.

And this was like an after-school activity almost, was it, then?

Yeah, it was an after-school activity but it wasn't like forced upon us. It was just there. It was just something that we wanted to do. Other kids wanted to hang out in the parks. Other kids wanted to play football but we just wanted to do this as an activity to mess around because it allowed that. With skateboarding there was no strict training guideline. It was just hang out with your mates and skate and that was it.

And where... I mean, there was no YouTube in those days so where did you pick up ideas for tricks from?

We picked up tricks from VHS videos. I had a lot of them. There was a shop in the City Centre called 'Shotgun' and I remember when we first looked in the window there was this video screen and it was playing this video called 'Daewon Song versus Rodney Mullen.' We couldn't, like, afford all the VHS's so a bunch of us would just be stuck outside of the shop, just watching these

videos saying like, 'Oh, that's how you do that trick.' 'That's how you do that trick.' But there was, obviously, like a time limit of how much we could watch the videos and then the guy in the shop was so nice to, like, change videos and let us watch the other videos they had in the store. It kind of evolved into us saying...

(Brief break in interview – external noise).

We were looking in the window at Shotgun.

You said that he allowed you to watch... change the videos.

I'll get you to do that bit again. Shotgun... whereabouts was that then?

That was... do you know where Krispy Kreme Doughnuts is, in the City Centre? Or there's like a house... is it Debenhams? And there's that new arcade place, so it was in that area.

If you can tell us again about the... the story about how you saw these VHSs.

So how we came along with discovering tricks was watching VHS's and there was this shop in the City Centre called Shotgun and they would play videos through the window and all of us would just be watching these videos outside of the shop. And the guy who owned... or was working at the shop... would kindly change videos for us to watch other tricks and other videos and just know more about the culture.

We all decided, one time, that we had an ambition to create a video to be played in that shop window, just for our own satisfaction. We thought it was so far-fetched for us to do something like this but we made it happen. We got our video of our schoolmates just playing at this shop window. We was all so proud of it but it was so rubbish but we were just stoked that we had our video playing in the shop window in the City Centre.

So tell me how did that...? Who had the gear and who shot it for you then?

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So the person that had all the gear and all the tech was myself. Everyone would reference me, like, that guy from the Goonies. He would have all these gadgets and stuff so I had, like, a Sony... just a handheld camera. I would have a PlayStation and a VCR and I wanted there to be music with the video so it was so technical how I had to make this video.

After it was all shot with this camera and had to connect the yellow lead into the back of the VCR, the left side audio of the camcorder to the back of the VCR and then, from my PlayStation, where I wanted the music to come from to the other audio side. When you had to record on a VCR, you'd have to press play and record at the same time. I had to press play on the VCR, where the trick landed, and with my right toe I had to press play on the control pad to play the music at the same time. So it would be like play/pause and

just had to do it over and over for every single trick or edit.

Amazing. And did... the other thing is did you... as you got older, did this group continue to go to the City Centre and did you get to know the kind of the crowd that was around the City Centre, although they were a bit older than you... as time went on?

As time went on, like when you grow with friends, it's like you grow together, you grow apart, you grow together again and then you kind of like find your own ways of who you want to hang around with and I felt like ... I really liked hanging around with my younger lot. I was kind of intimidated by the older lot but then my younger friends, they wanted to hang around the older lot so I kind of... I don't know. I didn't distance myself but I kind of kept myself to myself and I let my group of friends start to hang out with the older lot and then... we all still were friends but it's just... different focuses led to different directions.

Yeah, we all got to know what everyone was up to so it was kind of like, even if you didn't speak to that person across the Station Square you'd still know their name and all about them and stuff.

Because the other thing was... you were saying about your stepfather making the box with the edges. Now this is the whole point about the architecture of Milton Keynes... was all of these bits of granite with edges and the blocks and so on. Was that a real attraction to go and try out doing that up in the City Centre or did you mainly stick around the Bletchley area?

I think, because we grew up skating, like, Milton Keynes station... we were still skating the station before I built the Grind Box. So we wanted something similar in Bletchley to have that City Centre feel. So something that was about the same height so then that way, in Bletchley, we would have a training facility, even if it was just one box. So we would learn all these tricks on a box so then, by the weekend, we'd be ready to go up to the City Centre to do the tricks that we'd been practising.

And those kids that you got to know... those people you mentioned that were at Wellsmead together with you, in the kind of junior school... did you all go to Lord Grey afterwards?

Yeah. The majority of us we all went to Lord Grey... like, yeah, we all went to Lord Grey.

In terms of the other people at Lord Grey, what kind of... do you think there was... were you like all the other kids really accepted, like, skateboarding... was there more to what distinguished you from say some of the other kids?

In school we was definitely not the popular bunch but we felt we was the individuals of the school. We didn't feel like we was falling into certain trends like the football crowd or the pretty boys or ... we just kind of felt like we was our own and nothing could really touch us. We was like ... if you see some of

the videos of how we would dress, it was so different. I was in bright yellow trousers. My mate is in a bright red t-shirt with a red cap and others are in, like, ripped jeans and chains. So we got called a lot of names but it didn't really affect us if they would call us 'Greebo.' It would be like we'd look up what the word Greebo meant and we'd like... that's nothing like us so we'd kind of let everyone deal with their own ignorance of what they thought of us and we just carried on as we were.

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Maybe you've answered this already, being as much as... I was gonna say was there a kind of a clothing that was associated with skateboarding but you make it sound as though no, there wasn't. It was very individual. Is that right or not?

Yeah. Skateboarding back then was very individual. It wasn't... you couldn't dress as a skater. It's like me and Carter and Norris, we was into hip-hop music so we would dress how we looked at hip-hop artists. That's how we dressed. In baggy clothes, kind of more the hip-hop look. And then we had like Lewis, David and Luke Webb, who were in bands and stuff that played instruments and they would dress with the ripped jeans and everything and Nirvana t-shirts and all this stuff. But just because we're friends doesn't mean we have to try and look like each other.

It's like the way how we skated was the music we listened to. So that's kind of dressing like a skater if you want to call it that but it was no dressing as a skater. It was just dressing as ourselves with the interests that we liked and that's how we skateboarded.

So, again, there was no particular music? You had your particular likes. Other members of the group had their particular likes so there's nothing that you... you weren't, kind of,... yeah, you weren't a group that had to have the same shared musical tastes, fashion tastes, anything like that? So what kept you together because you were quite a diverse group?

Yes. I think that one thing that actually kept us like an eclectic group together was just this toy on four wheels. It was really just this one thing. Like even if we was all at different levels, listened to different music, different ethnicities ... this one, common toy that we all liked was the bonding for all of us.

And just talking about that... where did you get your board from?

I got my first board from Argos, so one of those cheap £20 boards and for years I couldn't afford one of those pro setups so it would be scraps from the older lads at the skate... at the station... and they would like... Rob Selley would sell us boards. There was a guy whose name is Kade in the graffiti world. He would sell us boards and we'd just get bits and bobs out of all the older lot because they would just sell them on to us or give them to us if they could.

Again, to me, that is quite interesting because there's, particularly amongst men and boys, there's this kind of 'boy's toys' thing about have to having 'the best.' Even though you might not be any good but it was, again, slightly different. You could be very, very good but be doing it on pretty cheap... not sub-standard... but not the best.

The best. I think the whole quality thing back then didn't matter so much. It was how much you loved it because some of my friends were more well-off than me and they would have, like, the prestigious skateboards and ... over a £150 set-up and we'd be looking at it and thinking, 'Wow,' and you'd ride it and you'd feel like, 'Well, this is really good. It does feel great.' But I, for about a year or two years just on these cheap skateboards, but I just wanted to learn as much as I could on these skateboards. Even if someone had a better skateboard than me, I was still trying to push, like, the levels and what you could do with a skateboard even if it was a cheap one. But then, by the time I got a good one, it was... it made it a lot easier.

I bet. In terms of skateboarding... I mean, there's part of the thing was there was a lot of hostility to skateboarders in Milton Keynes... Central Milton Keynes... because they were, sort of, supposedly damaging the granite and there was also in the shopping building all kinds of things. Did you have any kind of brushes with the law at all while you were doing skateboarding?

We had a few incidents with the law. Nothing that got me into trouble personally but it was just kind of like seeing how the security guards were because we didn't really seem them as like policemen. If it was policemen then we would, like 'We're kids. We're gonna stop.' But the security guards, we didn't really see them as authority. We kind of gave them grief, like heckled them but, through time, the security guards would become more and more aggressive and then...

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There's even times when I was skating with... when we became a bit older and we had younger kids with us and then they would, like, throw racist remarks at the younger kids and we're just thinking, 'Whoa! This is a bit out of character for a security guard.' I even have video footage of one being, like, racist to a kid. It's like a kid of fourteen years old and it's just... when you see that you, kind of... you kind of wanna behave because you just see that they're not in their job anymore. They're being them and letting their feelings or their suppressed anger on us kids.

Tell me a little bit about this kind of... when I say switch, I don't know. Maybe the thing's around simultaneously but you got into dance in a big way. In fact, you're still there, presumably.

Yeah, yeah.

So how did that happen? Was that separate or did... was it in any way connected with the skateboarding?

The way how I got into dance, going back a bit. My uncles were quite young. They skated, they did dance. They did so much cultured stuff because that was in the eighties so that era had a lot of culture going on. So I grew up around dance. My mum and dad were actually dancers so I grew up knowing how to dance first but, as I moved to Milton Keynes, there wasn't really much boys that danced. It was my uncles in London who danced but I got... they was no longer around me so I was mainly skateboarding because that's what my friends would do.

And then there came a time in... when I was about eighteen/nineteen, where I was skateboarding for this company called Karma and then I was dancing at the bus station with a crew that I had called Pink Mafia. Then we was... the skaters would be on this side, skating the main Buszy Park that you see today, and just around the corner there'd be this big reflective window and I'd have, like, my students and my friends just dancing outside of this reflective window. And there was a little plug socket that we could plug our Boom Box into and that's, kind of, how I made the switchover. Kind of just moving over this way and just found myself wanting to dance with my mates than skate with my mates, because I'd done that for so many years, I felt like... it wasn't like to say that I don't want to skate anymore. It was just this is something new and something I could grow in as well.

But it was literally round the corner from where the skateboarding... I mean, you were still in... at the mecca of it, as it were?

Yeah. I still had my skateboard with me, even if I had dance rehearsals, but it felt like the dancers wanted to do more and the skaters just wanted to chill out a bit more. I was like, 'No, I'm a doer. I need to keep on doing stuff. I can't just skate all the time.' Even if I was getting free product from sponsorships. I had dance work that was paying money at the time so it was, kind of...

I had to make the choice of what do I want to do because even, like, my sponsor at the time was telling me, "Mark, what do you want to do? You have to pick one, because you're missing skate competitions and you're doing dance shows instead." So it was just that decision of do I stay skating or do I do dance shows, which was not an easy choice but when you have a company telling you to make that choice, you kind of feel like I'm gonna do the opposite. I'm gonna dance even...

What was it that actually made... you know, when you're faced with that decision, what was it that swung it, do you think?

I think what swung the decision was pressure. As soon as there's pressure added into something that you love it kind of defeats your love for the art. When we... like me, Sean Smith and Joe Nobes... we were sponsored by Karma at the time and then we was just being taken to all these competitions up and down the country but there was no kid category to compete against so we had to compete against the top pros like Danny Wainwright, Flynn Trotman, Fabrizio Santos... all the international... like there was no kid

category. It was just like, "You're facing against the pros." And we never ... around Milton Keynes we never had the skate to s to learn how to use ramps so we was just clueless on how to do it.

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So it's kind of demotivating when you're having to perform well for these companies and then you go to these competitions and this is who you have to face. But it's not an alien situation because you look at people like Nyjah Huston, who was nine years old but his dad raised him in a skatepark and he was already competing with the big dogs so... it's still the same today. There's no age categories. If you're that level you have to go against the big pros. Just yesterday an eleven-year-old won the SLS for the women and that's... yeah, it's just incredible that there's no age categories to let this sport be defined.

How did you get this sponsorship? Where did that come from?

I had a sponsorship before Karma. In... I can't say the years but I'd say I was in Year Nine at the time and my friend, Paul Singleton, who was in the year above me...

This is about fourteen/fifteen ...?

Yeah, around fourteen. Paul Singleton saw this advert in Sidewalk for a company called Clown Skateboards, looking for a skater. I was making 'sponsor me' tapes all day long, like I loved making sponsor me tapes. Paul Singleton said, 'Send it to this company.' So I sent it over to the company, they liked it. I ended up getting a sponsor with Clown Skateboards and then, years down the line, I find out that the person who did all our graphics for Clown, like the T-shirts, the boards and everything was actually Banksy. Yeah, so it was like... at that time we was like, 'No.' We didn't like the graphics. We didn't like none of this. I got this Tesco bag full of cheap paper stickers. I gave them to all my mates who skated. We stuck them all over the bins in our school, all over the benches. There was an assembly meeting saying, 'whose done this?' And we're all hush-hush about it. And then down the line... I still speak to the guy who run the company and each of those stickers now cost £200. [Laughs]. It's insane.

So sponsorship meant what? They would give you free gear and then what did they expect in return?

Sponsorship meant that you'd get free product but with the free product you're a walking advertisement. So you always had to wear the clothes and everything that you filmed, everything that you did, like walking around... you just had to constantly wear the brand. And when you're in competitions you're showing off the brand. Yeah, you're just a skating billboard really.

And do you think you got it because you were making these videos? Was that the... that was the added extra that you had which, perhaps, others didn't have?

I think, at the time, when I got my sponsorship, there wasn't much young kids skating hard. There was loads of kids skating but there wasn't as much kids pushing the level in the UK but you could watch videos and probably see about three kids, even, in the USA that were like getting some publicity but it was very uncommon to see kids really trying to skate like an adult.

And Karma... they came in. They obviously wanted more, did they? They wanted you to actually enter competitions?

With Karma Skateboards, I kind of wanted to be on it because of my mates, like Sean Smith and Joe Nobes. They're closer to home so I'd rather skate with people who I knew. Because in Clown they had an incredible team. They had Benny Fairfax, Chris Oliver. These were all like... they're still pros... amazing pros today. But they was too amazing for me. I couldn't reach a level that I wanted to go to so with Karma it was more... they're not so far from Milton Keynes. It was quite a close company and then Sean and Joe was on it. So I thought it was the right move to skate with your mates.

And then... yeah, and then we got driven up and down the country to do these competitions because it was just a new company so with a new company they wanted to get their brand out there. So we had to represent them and it wasn't easy because they thought that we're meant to be the kids that are meant to make this brand go boom but... I think they're still on there. Karma are still going today and they've still got their kids and teens and all that, still trying to make the company bigger and bigger but it's just amazing that they're still around.

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In terms of Milton Keynes, we've heard people talk about... they came to... Milton Keynes was famous, if you like, for skateboarding because of its architecture, particularly in the City Centre. Ye, it sounds as if we were, in another sense... Milton Keynes... deprived because we didn't have what... you know, might be called a conventional skatepark. Is that... do you think that's the case... that was the case?

I think the case of Milton Keynes is not so alien to any other place. Like in London there's still not many skate parks... conventional skate parks. There's like... in America, you can see there's ramps, like... they support it but in the UK, even with dance, I don't feel they support these arts as much as America. Maybe that's because of the size or the popularity of things but I don't see it's taken as a serious thing like football or basketball. It looks like it's just noise and just nonsense. But I feel Milton Keynes evolved the sport in UK because Rob Selley, like, made the street style so solid, like skating switch, skating ollie, flat ground tricks. Just what was available in Milton Keynes.

So in the competitions it was all just ramps, ramps, ramps but in Milton Keynes there was no ramps. It was all flat ground skating and ledges, handrails, stairs but then, if you look at the competitions now, most of the

ramps are gone and it's now ledges, rails, stairs. So it's an interesting one because the architecture of Milton Keynes kind of made modern-day skateboarding today because, even in the Olympics kind of competition that they have today, is pretty much bits and bobs of what you would see in Milton Keynes. Just like there's a ledge going here, there's a ledge down there, there's a bank here. It's the streets of Milton Keynes.

Fantastic. That's going in! [Laughs].

It's crazy, it's so crazy because, like, when we was in the competition circuit we didn't know what to do because it was all just ramps that we was just ... it was not for us because it had to be for rollerbladers, BMXers and all we knew was just the streets. We never thought that our abilities would ever reach the platform of the Tony Hawk's but now it's surpassed the Tony Hawk's and Tony Hawk's kind of skating has gone out of fashion and now what's in fashion is the Milton Keynes style of skating.

Amazing.

Yeah.

Now we've got... you move away from skateboarding to dance and have a lot of success with that but you were just saying, because I wouldn't have known this otherwise... you were just saying you're back with skateboarding. Explain and tell us about that... the journey back, as it were.

So, the journey back into skateboarding was my son. He asked me about three years ago that he wanted to start skateboarding and my first thought was like, 'No! You don't wanna do this. This is the hardest thing.' Out of everything that I've done this is the most hardest, the most painful, the most stressful. Like you need a lot of patience for it and I always see the young kids, they don't have the patience for this kind of thing.

But then he started skating with me, started going to Baysixty6. He was with another instructor and then I was just like doing bits and bobs on the boards, seeing what I could get back. Then, as a parent, when you're spending time with your kids, you just feel like, 'Am I actually there? Am I present with them or am I not present with them?' But when I'm with him skating I just feel like this is... we are actually in the same time, same bubble. Like we've been to Dubai together, skateboarding there. Instead of just walking through the beach, we'll skate along the side.

So I just thought it's a good decision to raise your kid on a skateboard, just for the simple things of not giving up. If you fall down you get back up. Persistence, repetition... just all these little life lessons that I've learnt to take without actually knowing they was life lessons but now being able to have a physical example as well as being able to speak to him and nag him rather than nagging him... it can be like showing him in a skateboard way like 'This is what this nagging means.'

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If you want to succeed, yeah.

Exactly.

But you're not... I mean, it's only him you're teaching. You're not doing this in terms of running classes or anything else, are you?

Yeah, yeah. At Baysixty6 there's a guy that gave me a job. He saw me teaching my kid and he thought like I'd be good for teaching so there's like Saturday classes, where you can teach up to twenty/thirty/fifty kids at one time, which is just insane. Then we have skate camps as well, which are running right now, where it's just like intermediate, beginner, advanced. But I find teaching skateboarding is not for everyone.

People say that you can't teach skateboarding and I don't like to think of it as teaching skateboarding. I like to teach it... think of it as teaching them not to get hurt because it is a serious thing and I'd rather teach the kids how to skate safe, how to not get hurt rather than being... to my kid like, 'Throw yourself down some stairs and see what happens.' I'm just like, 'No. I've done that trial and error. There's no need to repeat that again.' I know it'll teach them how to be strong and hard but I just feel like there is a safe way to do it and teach them the safest way. They'll enjoy it more.

What, for you, has been the worst moment in your skateboarding career?

The worst moment in my skateboarding career... it was probably the best and worst actually, because when I was doing the photoshoot with Leo Sharp at the Theatre, I actually fractured my foot trying to do the trick because I was not used to a cameraman being so close to me. These flash things on your side. I just felt like, 'Whoa, this is intense.'

I was fourteen at the time. And then I fractured my foot whilst trying it. I knew it was hurt and fractured at the time but I still kept on going until I landed it. So that was probably the worst thing... fracturing my foot but then it was the best thing because I got my first photo in Sidewalk.

And what about ... this Baysixty6 ... where's that then? What's that?

So this skatepark in London was originally called PlayStation and then it was Xbox but now it's called Baysixty6. And it's like the biggest skatepark in London. It's great but it's just... it's got so much history to it, even like... I don't know if you know the Northampton Radlands.

We had a team that we qualified for, like me, Rob Selley, Damien Ince... we was all representing Radlands and we all went down to PlayStation to compete there and it was like the battle of the skate parks. So all the skate parks in England would go to this one skatepark, as teams, to fight it out there. Yeah, I just found like recently I've got video footage of it. It's crazy.

Finally... you've hinted at this but I was going to say what is it that... what have you taken forward into the rest of your life from your skateboarding experience?

What I've taken from skateboarding in my life is to not be afraid to try things and to not be afraid to be different and I would say from skating it has given you a sense of confidence but also humbleness, where you can be the best at things. You can do things that other people can't do but just because you can doesn't mean you should. So it, kind of, gives you this humbleness back because when you're teaching kids or around people who ain't able to skate but you can tell that they love skating, you don't necessarily want to just, 'Oh, look what I can do.'

So it gives you that confidence but it also gives you that humbleness to empathise with other people and let them be involved in the culture as well. I think that's one of the... I don't know... biggest skills as a human you can get because you can get so stuck in your own world, like climbing this ladder of learning and achieving and learning and achieving and then you kind of ignore the rest. But then, when you have such an eclectic skate crew that I grew up in... well, we was all different levels. You just kind of know how to fall back down to earth and just connect with your friends again, no matter what happens.

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Brilliant, Mark. Fantastic. Thank you so much.

I just wonder if we can just have one... the trick that you did for Leo. If you just talk about what that was. Is that your favourite place to skate... the Theatre District?

It wasn't but... because it was a new place for them to shoot, yeah.

So could you describe that?

So the photoshoot I did with Leo Sharp at the Theatre District was kind of lucky because Theatre District was a new spot at the time and they hadn't captured that of MK. They'd captured so much of MK but not that spot and I think, at that time, Rob and Paul Heywood were talking of the new, young talents in the town and it so happened to be that I could do something down at the Theatre District. I got some stuff at the station that I wanted to go in more because it was more technical and skilled and the trick that I did down the Theatre District wasn't as amazing as what I did at the station but I accepted it.

The photo looked great, like, just the way how I was doing ... it was a Melon Grab down the stairs, which a lot of skaters would think, 'How the hell did he get in a magazine for just doing a Melon Grab down the stairs?' But it's because it was a new spot and it had, like, even MKG in the back. I think for them it was just great to capture fresh, new blood and a fresh new scene and

that's how the photo came about.

Just on that... what do you think about the stairs not being there anymore?

When I've come back recently to see that the stairs are not there at the Theatre anymore, it's kind of like, sad but then you think of it as a positive if it's been captured and documented because then I can show my kid, 'Oh, yeah. These stairs used to be here.' And then just show him that, 'No matter what, kid. The world is always going to evolve and change.'

Really good, Mark. Fantastic, fantastic.

0:42:22

End of Interview

Transcribed by Stephen Flinn (August, 2019)