

Name: Matt Pritchard
Date of Birth: 1973
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Interviewed by: Nathan Lindsell
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00:00:08

This is Nathan Lindsell, it's 16th July 2019. Can I ask your name and your date of birth please?

Matthew Pritchard, 1973.

When did you first hear about Milton Keynes?

When did I hear about Milton Keynes? I think the first time I heard about Milton Keynes was off...it might have been Dan McGee or some of the Blueprint lot and they mentioned...I think they were talking about Rob Selley and KFC...*[laughs]*...and Rob Selley's obsession with KFC and I think at the time it was the only KFC in the country. That's how I heard about Milton Keynes – and apparently it's a good skate spot.

When did you first come here and what were your first impressions of it?

When did I first come here? I mean, I can't even remember my name half the time so...I mean, I couldn't even tell you when I first came here but I knew I came with the Panic and Blueprint team and we went to skate the bus station and just...and we just started up just going around and skating around Milton Keynes really. But as for dates and stuff, I haven't got a clue.

What were your first impressions of the skaters here? Was there anything distinctive about the way they skated? Were there differences...? [unclear]... 'cause of the architecture they had as opposed to other towns?

I think... *[long pause]*. What was that question again?

Yeah, what was it? What was your first impression of the skaters here? Was there anything...did they skate distinctive...was there

anything distinctive about the way they skated as opposed to other towns and cities in the UK?

What was my first thought on the skaters? The only person, to me, in Milton Keynes who stood out really was Rob Selley – I think it was Rob Selley and a few of his mates – and my first thing that stood out was baggy jeans. *[Laughs]* Rob Selley loved wearing baggy jeans and, yeah, that was my first impression of Milton Keynes that...basically Rob Selley and his mates, 'cause they were the local skateboarders at the time, and the skate spots were just...there was loads of blocks everywhere and...blocks and stairs really and that was it.

When did you first skate the Beige and what was your first impressions of it?

When did I first skate the Beige? The Beige is actually where we're at now, and we came here and there's a set of stairs and there's this set of stairs in the background and they didn't have any stoppers and they had a block which was sort of pretty low to get on and then quite a high drop. So we had fun skating that and then I remember coming to these set of stairs here and they had these skate stops on them and I just thought, 'That looks quite interesting,' so I thought, 'Wonder what it would be like...see if I can ollie it.' Yeah, so I came here and ollied the gap and knocked out a few more tricks.

Do you remember any of the tricks you did down the gap? Sort of what went into them...[unclear]..?

The first day I came here I ollied this gap and then, I don't know, I just had one of those days where I was having a good day and I ollied the gap and then I think, my second trick, I did a backside flip; and actually, when I did the backside flip, I couldn't believe it 'cause I wasn't really that good at a backside flip and I don't even know, to this day, why I even thought about putting a backside flip, it just came into my head and I remember riding away. I had a... *[unclear]*...as well, I remember that, and I was just...I was proper buzzing. I just went into the distance like...obviously I kept it quiet in my head but I was just like: "I just got all the way from a backside flip.' So I think, after landing that, I had that confidence in my head to go for more and then I think I 360 flipped it. So I think, on the first day, ollied it, backside flipped it and then 360 flipped it. It was...yeah, it was a good day.

You were the first person to do the Trusthouse double set and you said you had a little story to tell about that. Could you elaborate on that because obviously no one else thought that was possible, even now it's like...[unclear]..?

That was right, wasn't it? Was it, ollie, backside flip, 360 flip? It was, weren't it?

I wasn't here the first time you came, I just heard about it through the grapevine.

I can't even f***ing remember.

I've seen your video recently, the first time...

That's it, it was, weren't it? Yeah.

...and you used to do...you backside [unclear] it. I think you kickflipped it, backside flipped it, I don't know if you 360 flipped it first time. I think you did it the second time, it was like the... [unclear].

Yeah, I might...

I remember the second time you switch ollied the Beige – which was pretty impressive in itself – and 360 flipped it.

I can't even remember switch ollied... *[laughs]*...my head's fried.

I think, before you came, I think people had ollied this. I actually had a go at this and landed down it, like, at a twenty degree angle...[unclear]...but I just sort of hit the edge...[unclear]...and no one had flipped it before you came; no one had even thought about...[unclear]...that would be on the horizon...

But I think it's getting...if you remind me as well 'cause I can't...

I don't know. I've got questions from...[unclear]...the next...I think those shots from the next visit, the switch heel that you mentioned earlier where you hung up and I think you might...

Yeah, 'cause I switch frontside flipped it as well, did I? Did I switch frontside it?

I didn't know that. I have a feeling you did.

Yeah, I think I did, yeah.

[Inaudible discussion]

Was it [unclear] or McGee filmed you for the [unclear] and your...you do the tricks again and it used to be the only record we had, 'cause we only had the tape – you know, we need to get that on tape.

Shall I just sort of say out what tricks I've done down here, like ollie, like half switch 180, switch one side flip, kickflip, 360 flip, almost did a switch heel.

00:07:05

[Break in interview]

00:08:04

Could you run through a list of the tricks you've done down the Pritchard Gap.

A list of tricks I've done down...it's weird, you say it's the Pritchard Gap. "Oh, look at me, check me out. Look at my gap." I think I done...I ollied it, I kickflipped it and then I did a half [unclear] which is a switch frontside 180, back in the day. And then kickflipped, 360 flipped and a switch frontside flip and I almost did a switch heel flip as well. I remember catching it and then just sort of landed on the last [unclear] and then hanging up. But yeah, that's what I did. I couldn't do that now, mind. I mean, it's...I've just had a look at here earlier for an ollie and I was just like, "Phew," and I think this is about twenty years...twenty years ago, was it?

Twenty-five.

Twenty-five years ago?

Almost to the day.

Almost...so, twenty-five years ago almost to the day today?

Yeah.

Man, I feel old. *[Laughs]*

You were the first person to ollie the Trusthouse double set. Can you run us through the story about that, obviously 'cause that is nuts, even today, to even comprehend doing that?

The Trusthouse Forte double set. Now, that's quite interesting 'cause I think we left here and we were walking past the double set and I remember Dan McGee saying to me, "Oh Pritchard, basically, you need to get yourself down there." And I was just like...I looked at it and I thought, 'No chance, it's...' you know, I looked at it and I just thought, 'That's a long way,' and I just didn't even think about it.

00:09:46

And we come back the following weekend, 'cause we used to come here every weekend and have a skate and stuff, and we walked past the Trusthouse Forte steps and nobody said anything and in my head I...for some reason, I don't know why, I just thought, 'I think I might just give it a go,' and I said I'd try – and Wig was with us at the time as well – and I kept going back and

fore, back and fore, looking at the...looking at it and just thinking, 'I can do this.' But the run-up's really sketchy, it's got like...Milton Keynes is made up of like little paving slabs and them like little bumps so the board kept jumping and to try and ollie such a distance you need to get a pretty good speed. So anyway, back and fore, back and fore, and I ollied and I managed to clear the steps and that's when, in my head, I knew, 'Right, this is possible.' And I killed myself so many times. I mean, I landed and just went "Bang! Bang!" I was wrecking the side of my hip. And I remember just saying to myself, I thought, 'Well, if I don't do it this time, that's it, I'm giving up,' and then that was the time I actually...that was the time I rode away, I...yeah, it was...yeah, I was stoked. I think, if you see the footage – Lindsay was filming at the time, which was lucky – you just see me going off, like, screaming and shouting and the reason I was screaming and shouting was 'cause I was just...yeah, basically, I knew I could do it and after trying it so many times and just...I was killing myself. Yeah I was just...yeah, I was stoked. And I remember, for two weeks after that, I was f***ed; I couldn't really walk, so...hey ho. I don't who's done it since. I think Ben Grove's done it since, Josh Kasper...

[Unclear]

I think Mike Manzoori did it. I think he was the next person to do it, I think.

Apparently Rodney Clarke did it.

Oh Rodney...yeah, Rodders.

I always think it's like a gateway, I think there's definitely an element of not knowing whether it's possible and someone shows everyone it's possible and then it's a different thing, isn't it? [Unclear]...once you know it's possible. You found out it's possible, you did it...

Yeah, I think...yeah I think, with most things in life, when...if you know somebody's done it then you know it's possible but I think it's...when you're the first person to do something you're not really sure of it. And like I said, the run-up is shit and it's quite a long distance and it's quite high as well, so... Yeah, good day in the office.

Was there a reaction from your Milton Keynes visitors, in terms of like, it give you a boost to your reputation in the skate world?

What's that, sorry?

Did you like tricks you done in Milton Keynes, did it give you a boost in the skate world? Specifically the tricks that you did in Milton Keynes.

Yeah, skating in Milton Keynes and coming here and doing all the stuff down the Beige and the double set, at that time in skateboarding, for me, that's when, I don't know, I just felt really good and, everything about skateboarding back then, I just had a lot of confidence and there was that...it's hard to explain really, I just had that moment where everything sort of just started happening and I just made the most of it really and they were really good days and just hanging out with the Panic and Blueprint team and skating different places. We used to come here most weekends and Milton Keynes, I think still to this day, has a strong skate scene and, yeah, it's all good.

How do you feel about the legacy that the...obviously this is the Pritchard Gap, named after you. Kids who skate this now, who are too young to even remember Dirty Sanchez, they're still calling it the Pritchard Gap and they still look back to what's been done here. How do you feel about that?

How do I feel about the legacy of this gap and...I know it's weird, I find it quite hard to speak about myself to be honest, but...I suppose it's a compliment. It's quite nice to have kids of today, skateboarding, who want skateboarding back in, actually calling it the Pritchard Gap and stuff. Yeah, it's weird that; strange but at the same time, it's cool.

What role do you think Milton Keynes has played in British skateboarding history?

What role has Milton Keynes played in skateboarding history? It's played quite a big part in it really, I think, 'cause when a lot of American teams used to come to the UK they all used to come to Milton Keynes, so that's played a...it's played a massive part. Then there's people like Rob Selley and...I just...loads of skateboarders have come here, like Rodney Clarke and Mike Manzoori and people who've gone and tried...and Ben Grove, who've done the double set as well and a lot of people who were skating this, the Pritch Gap – it's weird talking about yourself; "Look at me!" Yeah, Milton Keynes has played a big role and it's a great place to skate.

00:15:22

So, I'll ask a question but if you could answer to Nathan so it all stays the same. I was going to ask a question about...so this thing in particular is like a skate stopper and you can see they've put in loads of skate stoppers. This place is kind of emblematic almost of that, of this period and this city where people would find skaters, and that ended up with the bus station and other things

happening afterwards. When you were doing this, when you were going to places and skating these and skating this as a skate stopper, did that mean anything to you, as a skateboarder, to be not only skateboarding the architecture but defying the architect, you know, the architects or the landowners that put stuff in? How did that feel and was that part of the thing at the time, was that part of the buzz?

Yeah, coming to skate spots which you've been coming to for quite a few years and then realising that the council have come along and added things like skate stoppers to stop you from skateboarding, in my head I just looked at it as an extra challenge. I mean, these...before the skate stoppers come here, you'd skate the three stairs and then all of a sudden the council put that there and in their head they think, 'Brilliant, we've stopped them from skateboarding.' And I just looked at it as more of a challenge really. I just...skate stoppers sometimes can be quite good because obviously it made this gap more challenging and more fun to skate but then...well, there's three...it's further back, I mean, they're properly...they're destroyed now, I mean, you can't skate them anymore, which is a shame, but yeah, I just...skate stoppers in general, especially like this one here, it just turns a skate spot into an even better challenging skate spot. So sometimes it's a good thing, sometimes it's a bad thing.

Very good. You came a long way to skate Milton Keynes – did you say you used to come every weekend? What's the background...it's a long way from Cardiff so it might be good just to...I don't know if we've actually got a record saying you are from Cardiff on the interview...[inaudible]. What drove you guys – 'cause I think you used to come down with Chris Pulman, and I don't know who else but other guys, there was like a crew of you, and you were like locals for a couple of summers it felt like. Why did you come so far and what was there...yeah, what was the reason?

Why did we come so far to skate Milton Keynes? It was...we really enjoyed skating here, I mean, it's the perfect place for skateboarding, all the blocks, the gaps, the stairs etc. And I remember coming here years ago with my mate, Chris Pulman, he used to have a...this light blue van and there was a skate comp in the bus station so we came down for that and then...I think that was one of the first times I actually came here and that was a laugh and then we just sort of...you know, we made friends here and we just kept coming back like quite a few...almost every single weekend – especially when I joined Panic and Blueprint, we used to come because Selley was here and it was pretty quiet back then and we could do a load of filming on a Sunday. So that's why we just kept coming back and, you know, I came over from Cardiff – I used to catch a train or one of my friends would drive

and, yes, we just...we kept coming back because it was a good place to skate, with good architecture, and it was quiet. I mean, we'd get the odd bit of...I mean, skating the Beige, by here, you've got these...you've got the two offices either side and the bad thing about it was, if you shot off on your board, you'd put the windows through. I never. I don't know if anybody else put any windows through but I'm sure over the years somebody must have. But, yeah, Milton Keynes is just...yeah, it's a good place to skate and that's why we travelled for so many hours to come and skate the place.

Just building on that for a second, I came to photograph you in Cardiff and they'd redeveloped Cardiff Bay, right, but this city...and they'd redeveloped it kind of like Milton Keynes in a way but that was...you were coming here before they'd done that, right? I can't express this...

00:20:04

What, before they..?

They were redeveloping Cardiff Bay and it was all suddenly smooth but Cardiff, before then, was all cobbled streets, it's a Victorian city, right? So that's probably why you were coming here. Is there something in that? See what I mean?

Yeah, I mean, skateboarding in Cardiff is good but there wasn't really that much. We had a big skate scene but there wasn't that much to skate and, before the Cardiff Bay development started, I think that's why we were sort of coming far away to come and find places to skate. But since Cardiff has been...they've developed a lot in Cardiff over the years. It was started with Cardiff Bay and then it's just grown out and there was a lot of skate spots eventually in Cardiff – street spots anyway – but I think that's one of the reasons why we used to travel so far to come and skate: because we didn't have that many skate spots in Cardiff.

You mentioned the bus station competition. I didn't know you guys were at that, 'cause there were so many people at that. That was in '92. What are your memories of it? What was it like?

That bus station competition, I...yeah, like you said, my...that was packed, it was a lot, lot of people there and I think it was just...it was literally just the bus station, the blocks and a few quarter pipes, I think it was. And I remember I think that was most probably one of my first photos in a skate mag. I think I had...that's it, 'cause me and Chris Pulman came down in his van and the two of us had [unclear] our heads, so the two of us were both completely bald, and yeah, I think they were taking the piss out of us a little bit and I think that's why we had a photo in the mag. And I think Pulman had a photo of skating and I think I had a photo doing something else, I can't remember what it was but... That

was a good weekend and I think that's when baggy jeans started coming in, the New Deal baggy jeans, so I'm sure the two of us were rocking a pair of them as well. Looking back, we must have looked absolutely ridiculous... [laughs]...but yeah, it was quite fun at the time.

Speaking of baggy jeans, do you have any good Rob Selley stories?

Rob Selley stories...oh God. Rob Selley was...my memories of Rob Selley, he was such a perfectionist when it come to skateboarding. He'd do the sickest, most technical trick and complain about it. And everybody would be sitting there going, "Oh my God, you know, he's just..." whatever it was, it was like unbelievable and he just...he'd skate off with a massive pissed off face. I was like: "Rob that was sick."

"Oh no, it was f***ing shit man, it was f***ing shit."

Yeah, that was my...that's my memory of Selley but he was...did Selley actually ever smile when he rode away from a sick trick? That's a good...I don't think I ever seen Selley smile. [Laughs] I think I saw him smile in KFC when he had a...three pieces of chips...[laughs]...but no, Rob. Rob Selley: amazing skateboarder and he always had the baggiest jeans and the baggiest T-shirts.

Do you think that Milton Keynes – 'cause you skated over a period, you came a few times I think while you were skating a lot – Rob was like the main figure for Milton Keynes and, since then, it's been like Sean Smith and some other...and obviously that whole generation of really amazing skaters come afterwards, do you think there's a connection between Milton Keynes and the way...do the people of Milton Keynes skate in a particular way and, if so, what is that?

Yeah, for me, Rob Selley was like the face of Milton Keynes and I think the way he skated as well, he skated...he was amazing on blocks and I think that's the biggest thing, with skateboarders coming from Milton Keynes, they're all really good at skating blocks because I mean, as you can see, Milton Keynes has blocks everywhere and now the bus station is just block heaven. And manual rolls as well, really good at manual rolls. So that's what I sort of...yeah, that's what Milton Keynes skaters are good at: skating blocks – and eating KFC... [laughs].

00:24:37

[Break to discuss interview]

00:24:51

What has skateboarding given to you throughout your life... when you first started skateboarding did you ever think that that would be such a big part of your life?

00:25:05

What's skateboarding given me? I think...that's a good question that is because I think skateboarding...I thank skateboarding for everything I've got today. It's shaped the person who I am because, before skateboarding, I was a little bit lost I suppose – young teenager, didn't know what I was going to do with my life. I found skateboarding, made a lot of good friends and...yeah, if it wasn't for skateboarding I wouldn't have worked in the industry – for Globe Skateboard Shoes – I wouldn't have had a TV show called Dirty Sanchez, and so it's thanks to skateboarding that it got me to, well, sitting here and what I'm doing today, you know, doing Dirty Sanchez, Dirty Vegan and many other things. So it's shaped the person that I am today and, yeah, I thank skateboarding for that.

Is there something about the culture of it that's done that, do you think? Like, the kind of anarchic or counter-cultural part of skateboarding, the defiance and all that sort of stuff. Like there's pretty much...in some ways, this is an emblem of your career, this spot, you know, like overcoming, doing things against the grain, you know.

Yeah, I...skateboarding...when you're younger you try and find yourself and skateboarding sort of...because I...with anything in my life I've sort of tried to push myself and with skateboarding it gave me that platform to be able to push myself as far as I could possibly go. And I think that this is the perfect example, it was a...you know, it was three set of stairs and then there was a big gap but in my head I looked at it differently and I just tried to push myself as much as possible. And then coming...talking about the double set as well. I think it...skateboarding taught me to not just settle with the easy things, just keep pushing and going for bigger...bigger stuff, I suppose. I mean, it might have hurt me in the process but...I mean I did some f***ing stupid things in Dirty Sanchez...[laughs]...so I think, did the painful stuff in skateboarding lead me to Dirty Sanchez? I don't know. I don't think so but...I mean, all the friends I made in skateboarding as well, you know, we were all like...you know, you were young, you didn't give a shit, you...and we got a lot of shit, back in the day, when we were skateboarders 'cause it wasn't the normal thing to do so we used to get bullied, we used to get picked on, we used to get into fights, but these days kids grow up and, you know, skateboarding's normal. It wasn't for us so, yeah, skateboarding and the people I met and the friends I made through skateboarding, was amazing and it really...like I said earlier, it really did shape the person that I am and I'm very grateful.

That's a lovely ending...

I think that's great, brilliant, yeah.

You said you had something to...do you need a question or have you got something to..?

Yeah, I...when Dirty Sanchez happened I sort of...skateboarding sort of got a bit quiet for me 'cause I was concentrating more on that and I sort of went down the party route a bit and I've sort...I missed that...'cause when I went skateboarding I was skateboarding every day and I missed that daily challenge of trying to push myself, so I sort of...I've changed the skateboarding, I was pushing myself in other ways, like just doing stupid stuff from Dirty Sanchez and pushing myself on the party scene, which was...well, I don't know how you look at it, negatively or positively, it was a bad thing in the end but I then...I swapped it for something positive which was the triathlon stuff and...Yeah, I just got into...I got into triathlon and that was my new buzz. I felt, 'cause I was a little bit older, skateboarding hurt a bit more. I mean, I'm forty-six now and the thought of trying to do the Trusthouse Forte steps is just a...*[laughs]*...no way Jose, but I just found triathlon and that, for me, that was another way of me pushing myself and, again, I wasn't just happy with an Ironman, I had to do the double Ironman, the triple Ironman, got to do ten Ironmen in ten days, so it's just that mentality that I've got, I just like constantly pushing myself and... And yeah, and sort of Sanchez went, triathlon came into my life and then I turned vegan, and then my YouTube channel come out and Dirty Vegan on TV as well, on BBC, so I'm just...it's all good. I still skate every now and again, not to the extent of what I used to but... I've lost my train of thought here, I'm just banging on now.

00:30:22

That's fine.

Is that good?

I'm happy with that.

Anything else?

That covered it really succinctly.

00:30:32

END OF INTERVIEW