

Note from Publisher.

On the development of this book it was decided to release it as close to the Authors wordings as possible.

Introduction

Some of you reading this book will probably think it's just full of me name-dropping about all the celebrities I have met and worked with. Well, you really could not be more wrong! When I decided to do it I wanted everybody to see where I come from and what I have achieved in my 36 years. I have been through a lot in that time and had some real lows. I wanted to show everybody who reads this that no matter where you come from or what you have been through, anybody can achieve what they want if they just work hard and have belief in themselves. I have tried to be as honest as I possibly can be. This may or may not be a good thing - you decide!

Please let me know on my twitter account @kp_est78

Chapter 1

I was born in Bramley, Leeds on the 1st of June 1978 at St James's hospital. My dad was a plasterer and my mum worked in a curtain factory; they never really had much money.

I have two older half siblings from my mum's side - a brother called Mark, who is ten years older than me and a sister Lesley, who is 12 years older than me. I don't really know that much about them, as they lived back in the Midlands with my mum's mum. They weren't really the best behaved of kids - always in trouble with the Police. The first time I even knew they were my brother and sister was when I was about 10. I never really saw much of them growing up, and I always thought I was an only child. I don't recall much about growing up in Leeds other than the house we lived in, 11 Landseer Grove in Bramley and the first school I ever went to up there.

I hated school even as far back as then. I never really fitted in with any of the other kids. One thing I do remember about it was being sick down the back of some kid's head. I got sent home at dinner time and I remember I had a small parcel waiting for me. It was a Star Wars figure, Admiral Ackbar and I was so happy with it.

My dad's only problem was his need to go to the pub all the time. He would go out to work first thing in the morning and as soon as he finished would go to the pub; then come home, have his tea and go back out again. It hurt my mum

because she obviously loved him, but she was on her own up there without any family, as they were all back down in the Midlands. In the end she made the decision to leave him over it, and in 1982 we moved to the Midlands to be with my mum's side of the family.

I often went back up to see my dad and my gran and Grandad though, and I will never forget their old house, 147 Granville Road in Bramley. They would always have a KitKat ready for me. I really liked my Grandad - he was a lovely old man. He would repeat what he said to me so many times because he forgot what he had told me, or he would fall asleep half way through telling me something! They used to enjoy watching Brookside together, as he was from Liverpool.

I don't really remember much about when we moved away from my dad or how I felt about it, but I do remember the first flat we lived in. It was on Hastings Road in Swadlincote, and it was horrible - so cold, dirty and damp. My mum got really sick from living there, which I only found out when I was older. Life was not good for us back then. None of my mum's side of the family had much going for them; they were all pretty poor to be honest. I will never forget putting some string around my tooth and hooking it onto the door to pull it out while watching Knight Rider! I must have been about 6 at the time and it's about my only memory of that place.

I soon started at a junior school in Swadlincote. I still never really fitted in with the other kids or ever really made friends with them, and back then I was about the only kid from a broken home. I would watch all the other kids getting picked up by their dads or mums, but I never really had that growing up. My mum needed to work to keep us both going, so I was picked up by my nan who I never really had a bond with - she was very much all for my brother.

All I ever really wanted back then was a happy, normal family with a mum and dad to come back to. My dad stayed living in Leeds, so I never really got to see him much when I was young. When I did go up it would normally end up in the pub, then we would go pick up a curry on the way home. I can't really remember when it was that my mum met somebody new, but he was called Harold and he was such a nice guy. He was only short, so I would wear his 501 jeans when I was about 9 or 10. He had a really good job in Saudi Arabia, and in 1987 we ended up moving in with him in his house on Chiltern Road in Swadlincote. I have a lot of good memories from back then.

Christmas was always good. Harold would get me all the best presents and everything I ever asked for; all the family would come over and we all watched Only Fools and Horses. It started to feel more like a happy family for the first time in a long time. I was still not going to school though, and hadn't really made friends with anybody.

When I got home I would spend most of the time behind a bed that was on its side in the spare room. I would hide behind it and play with my toys or draw stuff - drawing was always my way of switching off from my life. I would sit

there and doodle and just be zoned out. From a young age I always wanted to create things; I would fantasise about creating a working engine out of matchsticks and all sorts of other ideas that were going round in my head. I just loved to design things. The times I did decide to show up for school I would switch off and just day dream about life and the things I wanted to make.

I remember once I was sat in class daydreaming and wondered what would happen if the fire alarm went off. The next thing I knew I could hear the alarm. At first I thought it was just in my head because I was thinking about it, but then I realised it had actually gone off and it freaked me out a bit.

I had finally made a friend of this lad called Marc Edwards. He was one of the popular kids, so I found it odd that he wanted to hang out with me. I always felt a bit jealous of his upbringing; he had a mum and a dad there for him every day before and after school and his mum would get him ready - all the things I never got when growing up. I understand that now, after having kids of my own; my mum wasn't there because she was making sure money was coming in to clothe and feed us. I would do anything to protect my kids and give them the best I can in life.

Back to school, and my spelling was really bad. Letters just didn't make sense to me, and in those days nobody really understood what being dyslexic was. I was just made to feel like I was thick and was given books that were for kids younger than I was. They were awful - I will never forget them. They were called 'Fuzzbuzz' and I fucking hated them. It was so humiliating and the other kids were cruel at that age. I've always felt that my reading ability has held me back so much in life. I was a bit of a fuck-up back then. Until I was about 10 I had a problem with wetting the bed; my mum tried everything to stop it but nothing worked. I ended up getting hypnosis from the doctor and it never happened again. It was amazing.

I started to get into music around that time. I loved it all in the 80s - the music was just so feel-good - but I really got into a band called Bros. I loved everything about them, from the way they dressed to the London back-drop in their videos. I asked my dad if he could take me down to London for the weekend and when he said he would it was amazing! I loved it from the first second I got there. The bridges over the Thames, the buildings, the streets - I loved everything about the place and I felt at home there. Swadlincote was a bit backwards; it was such a small town, just for locals. I hated it! I remember asking my dad to take me into all the shops that Bros would get their clothes from and I got some of the Union Jack boxer shorts they wore. I even went as far as having my hair done like them and putting bottle caps on my shoes so I was the same.

I found myself drawing all the time by the age of 11. I would even draw on the beer mats in the pub when I was sat there with my dad. I wasn't like the other

kids my age; I suppose I felt like I had to grow up faster because of being alone with my mum - almost like a protector, especially as I got older. I even pierced my own ears with a needle; back then it was seen as being gay to have both ears done, but I really didn't give a fuck.

Whenever I was up in Leeds visiting Dad I would get my clothes from there because it was by far more up to date with fashion than Swadlincote. I think this made me stand out from the other kids too, but I didn't care; I was passionate about everything I did or wore, and when I've got my mind set on something there is no changing it. I will never forget the Unicorn, the pub my dad used to go to. The landlord Ken and his wife Judy were always really nice to me; my dad would have me do cartoon drawings of his friends, which always went down well.

In around 1989 Harold and my mum moved to Number 12 Trinity Grove. It was a really nice house - a new build on a new estate filled with lots of families. (I must have been about 11 at the time because I was about to change schools to go to secondary school, and I was enrolled at a place called the Pingle School in Swadlincote.) I have some really good memories of living there; for one thing we were some of the first people up there to have cable TV. Every Sunday morning I would sit drawing while my mum would make dinner with Radio 2 Classics on in the background. I remember the guy next door getting a Walkman. It was amazing - I had to get one! I used to collect some cards called Garbage Pail Kids; they were gross but funny, and I would sit and try to redraw them over and over again until I got them perfect. I think this was the happiest part of my childhood by far. Every Christmas all the family would come over and there would always be a family party.

I remember Marc getting a pair of Puma trainers one day; I loved them and I had to get some. I would draw them and keep drawing them over and over till I got a pair. It must have been where my love for trainers began and from that point on I always had the top trainers out. It was good when I went up to visit Dad because they had amazing trainer shops up there. The first pair I ever wanted was the Nike Air Max 90; they looked so cool it was like they had a spirit level in the bottom of them. I had to get a pair, but I looked everywhere for them and couldn't find them anywhere. Instead I ended up getting a pair of trainers called SPX, a gold and white boot. They looked really cool! When I wore them for school nobody knew what they were because it wasn't until about 6 months later that they finally came out in Swadlincote.

Every Sunday night I would watch a TV show called Spitting Image; I loved it and I would try to redraw the people on it all the time. It was the only good thing about a Sunday because I knew that the next day it was back to school. I hated secondary school. I was always put in the thick kids' class because they didn't know how to deal with me. Obviously I know now it was my own fault;

if I'd always gone to school and paid attention then things might have been a little easier, but every day I would try my hardest to get out of doing things or going to classes.

In the summer Harold would always take us abroad on holiday. It was nice we were getting family holidays, but I was really shit in the sun. I would get really bad sun-stroke, faint and burn. One year we went away and I burnt my back so badly it came up in big blistering bubbles - it hurt so much! We tried all the pills and potions from the chemist's but nothing soothed it, so my mum ended up putting cold water soaked sanitary towels all over my back to try to help. It was so embarrassing! I looked a complete twat - it made me look like I had a hunch back.

My mum ended up leaving Harold in 1990 when I was around 12. It turned out he was being a bit of a cock to my mum by then. He would have little tantrums about the silliest of things - like his dinner not being ready, that type of stuff. I will never forget that up until that point me and my mum would always say 'I love you' before bed, but it never happened again after we left Trinity Grove. We ended up having to stay with my auntie Sandra and her husband for a while. She was married to an Indian man called Mowie who would make the best home-made curries. My auntie would get my cousin John ready for school, and it was the first time I was properly around that family life-style. I liked it there, but it didn't last, as it wasn't long before my mum met somebody new.

His name was Phillip Lansdown and we ended up moving in with him in about '92. He seemed a nice guy at first, always trying to help everybody and always trying to be the funny man he thought he was, but the cracks soon started to show. It wasn't long before he was shouting at my mum or me. I got a dog when we first moved and I could hear him at night hitting it; I would hear it crying and there was nothing I could do to stop him - I was only 12 or 13 at the time. Then one day the dog disappeared. I knew he had done something with it but there was nothing I could do to prove it.

After my mum got her money from her divorce to Harold she got us a new home on Brook Street in Swadlincote. The only trouble was, that scumbag we were living with moved in too. I started to hate him: he was always shouting at my mum and trying to play mind games with people. None of the family liked him or would come around anymore. That was it - there were no more family Christmases for us. I can see now that she only put up with it so she could afford to look after me and pay the bills, but back then I didn't get it and I really hated everything about life. I would happily have gone to sleep and never woken up. I thought about running away to London so many times; it would even have been better up in Leeds with my dad. It got to the point that if ever

this Phillip came into the room I would get an empty, low feeling inside of me. I hated that feeling.

I had no time for school or having any friends, I just wanted to be close to my mum to make sure she was safe. I had nobody to talk to about it all, or anybody there to help. I remember once he put a live spider in my lunch box for school and a bee under my pillow. He really was a total scumbag and I fucking hated the sight of him. He was a bully, but it was only kids and women he would do it to; he had a go at me once round the back of our house. I told him to go fuck himself and he tried to hit me, then when I pulled away he tried to hit me with a spade. He was just a nasty man. We was on electric cards in that house and I remember once it ran out in the dark and he made us sit for hours with no electric, just so he could try to play some tricks on me. In my head I would think about killing him - just sticking a knife right into his gutless heart - but I knew that was stupid and I could never get away with it. The only thing that would help comfort me was to draw things.

I remember going to work with my dad one day and I noticed one of his friends had an Elvis Presley tattoo. It was only a cartoon drawing but it looked really cool and as soon as I got back to the flat I tried to re draw it over and over again. I was 14 at the time and it was 1992, when the tattooing industry was a lot different to what it is now. Back then you would just pick a basic design from the wall and get it done, but there was still something that got me interested in it. My dad's old-fashioned; he hated them then, and he still does really. He thought everybody with tattoos was a scum-bag, gang members or prison lags! My brother and sister had been tattooed, so as soon as I got home I asked my brother all about it and he told me how he got tattooed when he was in prison. They would use an old shaver or a motor out of a motorised toy car and an old Allen key and a pen. Somebody my brother knew gave me an old catalogue full of tattoo designs that a tattooist friend of his had left round their house. Something in me lit up with excitement. I had such love for the art of tattooing from that day forward that I would draw tattoo designs day and night, and even my school books had them all over their covers.

I made my own machines from stuff I would steal from school. Then I sat at home one night and had a go on myself; I did a little cross on my finger and a heart on my arm. It was really shit and I know now it was not a safe thing to do at all, but at the time I loved it. I just wanted to get a real one more than ever now. The guy that left the book was coming back to stay and tattoo at my brother's friend's house again. I just had to get something done, so I sold my stereo for £20 to the second hand shop. As soon as I got there I loved everything about it, from the hygienic smell to the look of the machines. When I had a look at all his designs I couldn't choose - I wanted everything - but I ended up picking a naked woman with a snake around her. I had it done on my lower right arm, and that was it for me! As soon as the needle hit my skin I knew I wanted to tattoo; then as soon as I left I wanted to go back and get more. I

decided to try and sell anything I could to get more work done before he left. When I got home and my mum saw it she just said, “You stupid bastard!” and that was it.

I didn’t really have much time for school after that. I knew what I wanted to do and school was not going to get it for me. My home life was still really shit; every day there was another fight with that scumbag, but I finally had something positive in my life to look forward to. Back then I would run away from things I didn’t want to do - and that was a *lot*! I think that was the main reason I didn’t go to school, but anyway my reading and writing were still really poor and I hated having to read out loud or write in front of people. I was so embarrassed I just ran away from it and I would not go in - that was unless I wanted to steal some more ink out of the art studio. I made friends with two of the kids in my class, though. They were both called Mark and not very bright, and they were from really poor families with criminal background.

Chapter 2

One day we spoke about going out robbing from the local toyshop after school. I planned it all out and told them what to do, and they got game boys and games in the first go, so we went back the next day and did the same. We got so good at it that I ended up taking them all over the place stealing everything we could, and we did it for months. I would take all the stuff to a local hang out and sell it to a lady who ran a club we used to go to.

They were not very bright lads, so I kept most of the money we got. I felt like planning all this was a bit of a skill I had, and I got a bit of a buzz from doing it too. I think it was just a distraction from all the shit in my home life. I was still only around 14 at the time and we never got caught doing anything; we could’ve done it for longer I’m sure.

I didn’t see it at the time, but I think that was the first sign of me going down the wrong path. The two Marks lived in a place called Newhall, just outside of Swadlincote. It wasn’t a very nice place to live; most of it was run down and a lot of the lowlife type of families lived there. I would hang around there after school, and as my brother also lived there I would spend a lot of time around his - I would go everywhere with him. One day I was up the park in Newhall and one of my brother’s friends offered me a fag. It was a roll-up and I didn’t think much to it at the time, but it was a cannabis joint he had given me. It didn’t really have much effect on me to start with and back then I just wanted to be the big man and look cool in front of my brother and his friends. It was fucking stupid, I know that now, but back then that’s who I was. I started to like the feeling of taking cannabis; it took my mind off my troubles and made being at home easier to handle. I would smoke it most days from about the age of 15 and I started to hang out with some of the local dealers – I found I got on with

them all so well, and they had an even shittier life than I did. I soon started to deal a little cannabis to the kids at school. The thing about living in Swadlincote was that for most people it was all about looking big and hard. That's what seemed important to them, and I was no different. I think my brother could see I was going the way he did when he was young. I would go round his for my tea most days and he would drop me off home after; some nights he would tell me tales of what he used to get up to, and how he ended up in Children's Homes growing up. They were not nice places. They would take his clothes off him to stop him breaking out, but he would still break out and steal a car and drive home. I can see now that he was trying to help me, but back then I just thought it was cool to do that type of thing.

I remember when School sent me on a week's work experience at a plastic moulding factory, which I saw as a good time to get more tattoos. I went to a guy who worked from his house in Swadlincote - my brother showed me where he lived. I got some skulls up my left arm to cover the little shit heart I did myself when I built my first machine. I just loved getting tattooed; I loved everything about the trade.

It was really hard to get tattoo magazines back then when there was no internet to view things and not that many people were into them. The school had just about given up on me by then; I hardly ever went, and when I did I would just end up in trouble. I tattooed some of the scummy kids at school round one of their houses. It was not a good thing to do, I know that now, but I was a kid. I just wanted to tattoo, and there was no other way for me to learn. One day I went in to school and the head spotted me in the hall and asked me to follow him. I went back to his office and he said, "You know why you're here don't you?" I thought he was on about me getting a tattoo, so I asked was it about that. But he didn't even know about it - he was on about some other kid getting a little cross tattooed by me on his arm. I said I never did it and that they couldn't prove I had. In the end they kind of just stopped caring about me turning up any more.

When I got kicked out of school one of the first things I did to make money was shop lift. There was a local Sports Centre in Swadlincote with a shop inside it that sold ski coats and that sort of stuff. It was all high end - the coats started at around £150, going up to about £400. I started taking a coat a day but within a month or so I was lifting 3 or 4 coats a time, and I would get anything from £75 to £150 a coat.

There was a local woman who ran a pub in Swad who would buy everything I got and move it on fast from the pub. I kind of got off on the buzz of it all: that fear of getting caught just made me want to do more. I never really wanted this for my life, but I had no education and nothing going for me - it seemed my

only option. Before I started this book I had come to look down on people like that, but going over all this as I write has reminded me this is the life I come from too. Most people don't want to live like that; they just don't have much choice. I feel really lucky that I got a break in life, a chance to do something with myself, and that I always had the drive to be a tattooist to keep me going.

In Burton on Trent there was only one tattooist to go to and everybody knew him. I really wanted to get more work done but I was still only 15 at the time, so I thought I would try my luck with him. I looked a lot older than I really was and I already had tattoos, so in my head I thought I might get away with it. I always wanted a little red devil on my bum - I don't know why, but I did. It was always full in there though, and I ended up picking the Fantasia Mickey Mouse. I had it on my lower arm and it cost me £13. I got on with him really well and I began spending a lot of time in there. I would draw up stuff for him to tattoo on the clients as they came in, and I had turned 16 by then so I didn't have to deal with school shit anymore.

My home life was still really bad. Mum was still with that scumbag, but as I was getting older and starting to get to know a lot of nasty people he would watch what he said in front of me.

I would get picked up most nights and go down town and hang out with some of the local gangster kinds that lived around there. It seemed so cool at the time and there were so many flash cars that would come down and hang out with us. Some of them were part of a big car crime ring. They would focus mainly on stealing RS Turbos and Cosworths, as they brought in more money when they were broken up for parts.

The guys we worked with used to have mirror cars of the ones we would steal, so what we would do was take replica plates and tax discs with us. When we found a car that matched we would swop the plates and tax disk, so to a police patrol they would be completely legit if it was rung up. Tax, insurance - the lot. Easy!

I started going to Manchester most nights with one of the lads. He would steal a Vauxhall Calibra Turbo and we would drop it off to these guys up there. They had a plan: it was always a black or silver car he would take, as the guys that would buy the cars drove those colours; we had copy plates made up, so if we ever got pulled we could just give their details.

There was always a chance of getting caught, and I really got off on the buzz. You could see these guys were really nasty fuckers, and I was only young at the time and really out of my depth. I would spend all the money I could make on getting tattooed. I was almost covered by now; I'd had most of my arms and all of my back done. I just couldn't wait to go back for more!

When we were looking for cars to steal we would go to car shows - mostly Ford. All the cars would have a list of every mod they had on them, even down to the alarms, and it was so easy to take. We would make a note of the number plates of the cars we wanted, and when we got back we would get a friend who had a car garage to run the plates to find out where the car was based. When we went to get it we would go down a day or so before to try find out who owned the cars. Some of them turned out to be fucking nut cases and they would come running out the house after you.

We finally got it down to a tee. There would be 3 of us go down: one would drive the car, the other would take the stolen car and I would stand watch, keeping an eye out for the owner. It was so cool to see how fast he could take a car; he would take a steel pole with him to break the steering lock and then he did the whole thing in about 3 minutes. When I went with them they always give me £100. I was only about 16 at the time and I thought I was so cool doing it. Looking back on it now I was so lucky I didn't get caught; every last one of the other guys ended up behind bars.

There was this one car that they tried to get but every time they did the owner would come running out with a bat. Then one night this lad asked how much they would give him if he got them that car. They didn't believe he could, but they said they would happily give him 2 grand. I was down with them when this lad went to get it. He just walked up to the door and knocked on it, and the guy who opened it was a big cunt - must have been 6 foot 4. The lad was about 5foot 10 and he just got in the guy's face and started shouting at him with a bar in his hand. He said, "Give me the fucking car keys!" The guy shit himself and just gave him his keys. I could not believe what I was seeing - he just took the car, told him not to phone the police for two hours, and then drove off in his car!

I walked in the house one day and I could hear Phil shouting at my mum, and I could see he was in the bathroom. I had the little steel poker thing for the coal fire on me, as I used it for protection when I was out, (I stuck it down the back of my trousers). I kicked the bathroom door open and it knocked him flying into the bath. My mum ran out of the room and phoned the police; he came running out after me and I stood my ground but he managed to get me to the floor. This day had been a long time coming. I wanted to smash his fucking head in and I give it my all, but my mum get kept getting in the way. He tried to hit me but I just kept blocking it, then I pulled out the poker and hit him across his legs. It took him down. He ran outside to get a brick and tried to run back in and get me with it, but my mum slammed the door on him and he just chucked it towards me through the glass. Glass went flying and some shards got me in the face. He

reached in and tried to grab me through the broken window; he cut all my neck up and I was covered in blood, but just as this was happening the Police turned up and arrested him. I had great joy in sticking two fingers up at him as they drove off with him, and after that we didn't see anything of him for about a week. It was so refreshing for the first time in all these years to feel safe in my own home, but then he turned up again one night. The back door had been left open and he just walked in and started shouting that he had a gun. He made us sit down while he shouted and raved for about an hour and then went to nip to his car, so I jumped up, locked the door and called the police. He soon took off, but he said I would pay for what I had done; he even tried paying a local drug dealer to beat me up, but luckily I knew him so he told me first.

I had to watch my back at all times and I would walk my mum to work to make sure she was safe. I was 16. I shouldn't have been doing those things or living like that, I should have been going out with friends. He finally went to court for what he did. Unfortunately he didn't get sent down for it, but he got a big fine to pay and he had to stay away from us or he would be prosecuted. This was some good news, but then I realised my mum would now not have as much money to pay the bills and would be struggling.

I started to try and help as much as possible. I even got a job as a builder's labourer. I fucking hated it but I stuck at it for about two months. I just wasn't up for doing these types of jobs - I loved to design stuff, I'm a really creative person - so I ended up leaving and went back to what I knew best: crime. I would get involved with the local dealers and I was really good at shop lifting.

I made a fold-up steel frame that I used to hide in the bus park behind the trees; late at night I would go get it out, feed it through the letter boxes, hook things up and feed it out again. It worked really well and I got away with it for a long time.

I got asked one day if I knew anybody who could burn out their car so they could report it to their Insurance as stolen. I thought yes, I could do that. The guy handed me £200 to do it and gave me a spare key, so that night I rolled the car down the road out the way and then started it up and drove it to some fields not too far away. I put petrol all over it – inside too. Trust me, you don't understand how fast it goes up! I nearly shit myself, it went up with such a bang. I had a friend waiting to pick me up and I had to run really quick to get in the car. My heart was beating so fast! I really got off on the buzz of doing stuff like this. Anyway, we had gotten away with it and we ended up doing it 3 or 4 more times over the year: it was a fast track to easy money. Back then I would do anything to make money, and I was mainly doing it to help my mum so I could slip money into her handbag just to help as much as I could.

It was around 1994 by now, and the rave scene was kicking in big time. I remember the first rave I ever went to. It was in Burton upon Trent and Carl Cox was playing it. I had been given an acid tab and an E tablet; it was such a weird feeling to have - it makes you think that you can see stuff when it's not

really there. Most of the people there were sitting around rolling spliffs, and there were so many beautiful girls at these things. I remember sitting down next to this girl and she asked me if I wanted a joint. I said yes, and then the next minute she pulled her bottoms down a bit and pulled some cannabis out of her knickers. I caught a little glimpse of her minge and I didn't know where to look. Everybody was so kind to each other at raves - nothing like it is now when you go out. When we left we walked back over the bridge out of town and I was hallucinating so badly I thought I could see the Titanic coming towards me. I was really losing it at this point so I tried to look the other way, but that was no better - I thought I could see dead bodies in the water. The bridge was only about a 5 minute walk but it felt like it took hours to walk over that night. I don't know why after that, but I kept going back and doing it most weekends. I really didn't have anything going for me in life; I thought this was about as good as it was going to get.

I was still doing the car thing too, dropping off the stolen cars in Manchester. We got on with those guys really well and we would go to parties they would have up there. It was the first time I ever saw a gun and I will never forget it. We were in a club with a couple of the guys from up there and I could see the inside of one of their coats. I thought I could see a gun in the inside pocket but didn't know for sure, so just forgot about it. When we left I got into a car with one of them. I was staying in Leeds that night, so he said he would drop me off but he had to go do a little deal on the way. He took his coat off when he got in the car and put it in the back.

He had to meet the guy in Leeds back of the train station, under a bridge. When we got there it must have been about 3 in the morning, and he told me to stay in the car while he went to meet him. He went in the back, pulled out a bag and stuck it in his back pocket, and then he pulled out a gun from his coat; he said he was taking it just in case, as he had never worked with this guy before. The rave scene was quite a good thing back then – even the drugs were cleaner – but there were a lot of dealers being robbed by other dealers at gun-point, and when he got out I didn't have a clue what was going to happen. He was gone for about 20 minutes; I couldn't hear anything from the car or see where he went, but when he came back he chucked me £50 and said, "That went well!" laughing to himself. I knew I was getting involved with people I shouldn't be, and I was kind of scared but thought it was really cool at the same time. I wanted to brag about it, but knew I could not say anything. I know now it was a really silly thing to do; I would absolutely hate for any of my kids to do anything that I did when they grow up. Drug taking was a common thing by then. It was always around and easy to get hold of; I was turning into a not so nice person, and when I look back now it doesn't seem like I ever *was* that person.

I met two lads in 1997 called Carl and Keith and I got on with them really well from the start. We just had fun every day, and spent most of our time

getting stoned and making money any way we could. There was this guy who lived up the road from us. Nobody liked him - he was a registered paedophile. His windows were always getting put in and he would stand at them most nights watching what we were up to. He would go up to the phone box at the top of the street and phone the police telling tales on people, and some nights we would follow him up. I would block the door shut with him in there and we would all pick a corner and piss on him through the gaps in the door. I know it sounds bad now, but I was young and he was not a nice person at all. One night I walked past his house and he was stood out watching what we were doing, so I jumped over his fence and bear-hugged him up in the air, then flipped him upside down and put him in his wheelie bin. His legs were flapping around all over the place, and the twat was there for ages while we just sat over the road watching him. When the Police turned up they asked us if we did it; we said no, we just wanted to see how long it would take him to get out.

Another time, Carl and Keith went out stealing car stereos and we got pulled in by the Police. I was sat in the back of the car and I pushed my coat over them and squashed it under the seat. I pushed it as far under as I could with my feet so they didn't see what I was doing. They looked around the car but never picked up on what I'd done. We were so lucky to get away with it!

Carl was very unbalanced. I remember him sticking a knife under a dealer's neck because he said something he didn't like. He didn't take shit from anybody, but we would never turn on each other; we always had each other's backs. I'd never had friends like that before. Keith was a mardy guy - it didn't take much to get him to flip. I would keep flicking him in the balls just to piss him off, taunting him all the time, but he never turned on me.

I would do anything I could do to make money other than get a job. I had some thick guys out stealing from catalogues, shops, or from anywhere we would be able to get money from. When I think about it now I'm so embarrassed about what I used to be like. It really doesn't seem like that was me. One day me and Keith were out sorting some stuff out and there was this rich kid who was a bit older than us parked up down the road. He would always make comments when he drove past us. He was a right prick. Daddy had got him a Vauxhall Astra GTE - he always got what he wanted. When he came past us this day he made some comment as usual as he drove by. Then he pulled up down the road to pick his mate up, and he was still waiting for him as we went past. Keith just pulled him out the car and started smashing his head into the side of it. The lad's mate came running out, but he looked at me then did nothing. Keith really fucked him up - there was blood everywhere. He kicked him in the face about ten times and got blood all over his shoes; he could be a really nasty cunt when he wanted to be. Then we just walked away and carried on with what we'd been doing, but Keith was really hyped up after it. He saw this lad walking down the road, so he went up to him and said, "Give me your fucking shoes!" The lad tried to say no, but Keith just took them anyway. We

couldn't afford to get pulled over after what just happened with one of us wearing blood stained shoes.

Every couple of weeks I would pull away from it all and go back round my brother's for a bit, and Carl had a flat in Newhall where we would hang out - it was on a street that everybody called 'Cannabis Court' which says it all really, doesn't it! Everybody knew where we lived, so if anybody ever wanted to get hold of us it was easy to do. One day two black guys pulled up the lad that would do our running around for us; when he got stopped by them they were in a big old Rover. They told him to come over to the car, and he stuck his head in at the window to be greeted with a gun in his face. They told him to tell us to pack in what we were doing or they would stop it for us. I didn't react much, but Carl really wanted to get his own back. We didn't know who they were or where they were, but the lad who got the gun in his face come running in crying - it really scared him.