

DL: .....If you know about the history of rock and roll it's all part of the parcel, Keith Richard and Brian Jones and all that stuff. With all the highs and all the lows I'm so glad to be associated with these guys, much more than any other person that I've worked with, including

Bob: I've got to say that being associated with The Clash, being part of that whole thing, makes me the proudest. Even being in the back shadows, which is where I was glad to be. I was trying to remember today when I first met Joe. I can't for the life of me remember. But I do remember seeing them at the Roxy Harlesden....would that have been before when they opened Roxy?

CS: I think it was February 77....

DL: And I think that was the first time that their performance kind of..

CS: Did you go the 100 club festival?

DL: No.

CS: I saw them at Fulham Town Hall in September 76, they were supporting Roogalator.

DL: I remember them. I remember the name, not the music.

CS: When did you move into Forrest Hill?

DL: Oh God, dates, that's a hard one.

CS: Before the Roxy or after?

DL: Before. Definitely before the Roxy, because I remember getting the Roxy gig, Acme was open. I first met all these guys through Acme Attractions really, because obviously they do the march down to Vivien's shop, and the only other place to go to was our shop, and that was always more user-friendly, ie the pants were £20 instead of Vivien's £60. Plus I used to give a lot of punk rockers money at that time. I used to feed Keith Levene I remember. He used to hang around a lot. He was just one of the kids on the scene, there was him and The Slits I was particularly close to, and they hung around the shop a lot....and funnily enough Joe and Paul and Mick, they had passed through the shop, but it was funny there was this thing...it was kind of a macho thing until these guys started making a little bit of a name for themselves on the circuit I was sort of the king of the block...I'd wear the dark glasses and grunt at people when they came in, and Jeannette would be the buffer between me and the customers.

Consequently everybody loved Jeannette, and they probably came to the shop for two reasons – Jeannette and the music. With me and Joe particularly and with me and John there was this massive stand-off period of like ‘who’s that cunt?’ ‘who do you think you are?’, and we didn’t actually speak to each other for months. But it has to be said that because of the music that quickly disappeared, and that night...I think the first member of The Clash I became friendly with was Paul. That’s from seeing him around at the shebeens and the Blues dances with Caroline Coon...I actually was not very nice about Caroline and Janet Street-Porter in those days....I was very vocal about it in that punk rock way. There was a thing about having to have an opinion, even if it was right or wrong, and being able to shout it out loud and think about the consequences afterwards. So consequently I was like: “who the fuck does Caroline Coon think she is?...She’s from the sixties and now she thinks she’s down with us punk rockers”. “Janet Street-Porter? Horse-mouth!” People I’m now really good friends with....the naivety of youth. What can I say? They were probably having a good laugh about it, because they’d been there before and seen the cycle....so I became friendly with Paul first, and then really when I made a connection with the Clash guys it has to be said was the White Riot tour. Because I’d quit – Acme Attractions had transformed into Boy. Boy I couldn’t live with because it became a sort of tabloid version of what punk was all about. About 3 weeks after it opened I quit, and

stayed a little while longer...and I had a little bit of money, and I gave it to the Slits for supposedly management. I took them out on the White Riot tour, and that's where I really became friendly with Mick and Joe particularly. It was on that tour: I remember standing at the back of the hall watching the band with Bernie, and he was standing there in a kind of managerial way, and I remember looking at him and looking at the band and thinking 'nah, I ain't a manager'. So essentially after the White Riot tour I got into the Super-8 thing. And again, part of what I am today, The Clash/punk rock are directly responsible for that.

Because before then, when I was growing up I was a Beatles fan, and you start to get into that fan mentality, where you're helping to elevate someone else while at the same time keeping yourself down there somewhere. And it was due to Punk Rock that I realised 'how absurd! You can be part of this too'. And in a flash of inspiration I picked up a super-8 camera and re-invented myself as a film-maker.

CS: Who gave you the camera?

DL: A lady called Caroline Baker, who was then Event Editor for Vogue magazine. Much respected. So the Roxy opens, and for the life of me I can't remember the Clash on opening night. But that might have been because of my drug consumption, but I can't remember that, although I was definitely there... me and Jeannette still had a foot in the

Kings Road camp, punk was coming and sweeping that away, but we used to have connections, so consequently, don't ask but I found myself at the Roxy DJ-ing on acid. So it might be that. One night I was DJ-ing down there and I had a cyst in my eye, I'm on acid, and I had this cyst burst! I had to go to hospital, get it cut out and come back and continue DJ-ing. Don't do it folks. Anyway, truly inspirational, Punk Rock, all those kind of things like acid got wiped away, and I stuck to my weed. Even though I've got to say, a lot of the punks were into speed. In fact there was a smack section that really came in. You know all this.

CS: I was amazed at this. Everyone said it was all Johnny Thunders' fault. Basically there was a lot of smack around.

DL: Until Johnny Thunders came in they didn't have the glam side, they were just like hiding, wherever they did their shit. Johnny Thunders comes over and it was overground all of a sudden. And that was two distinct groups. And even the speed thing it has to be said – a few continued doing that, but Joe dabbled in it early on, got out of it fairly soon, because it just didn't work with his performance. That guy didn't need it! If anything Joe needed valium to slow him down. In Kings Road there were speed phases, and then there was an acid phase...this was all pre-punk rock. This was the legacy of one end of

the Kings Road turning over. But before punk rock the hip thing on the Kings Road was like Andrew Logan's alternative Miss World and Luciano and Dougie Fields and..

CS: Loosely associated with Roxy Music.

DL: Yeah, yeah, ...Paradise Garage...yeah, that was just moving out of the way...I had a pair of those wing boots, and worse I wore them. Anyway, then I end up living in Forrest Hill and it's me, Leo, JR and Tony, and they're all worth a mention because they all went to the Roxy. And to cut a long story short Joe moved in for a while. He must have come from....Albany Street?....I get totally confused about the date, but he ended up in Forrest Hill for about a year.

CS: That was 77.

DL: Right, well he moved in and had all his stuff there. I didn't see him that often, he was always moving around and going to other places, but I do remember smoking and playing different record. I remember he stole my 'Count Ossie and the Mystic Revelation of Rasta Fari' triple album. Which I never forgot. Joe, you bastard. But it's cool. We're through that now. And I remember things at Forrest Hill where he'd come to black functions with us, coz I remember once

me and Desmond taking him to a black wedding reception, and he'd been the only white man there. Somehow Joe had this way of interacting with...getting involved...he just warmed to people, he engaged them in conversation, and in that engagement he'd make that person feel very special. Like they were maybe the only person in the world, which he continued all the way through his life he made people feel special, even though they weren't....Joe seemed to like everybody. It wasn't a quality in him that I admired, but I did in a way. I did in a way. He was an equaliser. I kind of dug that about him.

CS: But also you know that he had the diplomacy of a diplomat's son.

DL: It's funny you should make that analogy now, the diplomat's son and being diplomatic, but to a fault, I mean Jesus, look at the people he'd engage. And his energy was tireless...it was particularly a man thing, I've got to say that, Joe was always surrounded by a bunch of geezers. Which was great because we'd get to pull all the girls around the edges. I remember taking him to places like 4 Aces, he'd be the only white man in the 4 Aces, and again, after they'd kind of got over his look, coz to them it seemed like some kind of right wing thing, but when he lit up a spliff they realised that he wouldn't have been in there if he was like that. I remember he came to the 4 Aces, and the guy name-checking him on the microphone while Joe was off making a

spliff...and he's so shocked he blows the stuff out of his hand. I remember me and Leo took him to the Hammersmith Palais, and that was always interesting, because I remember Joe was a bit disappointed, because he expected reggae, I think he was enamoured with the ghetto fabulous thing, and I think it was an eye-opener for him, he didn't realise that all those people were trying to get out. And he realised that it was his own misconception. Everyone wanted to dress up glitzy and blah blah blah. When we were in New York and Grand Master Flash first came on, he came on in all this horrible, glitzy stuff, like sequins...the next night he just wore jeans and a T-shirt....

CS: Forrest Hill...which floor?

DL: Third floor.

CS: What sort of room?

DL: Tiny, like a closet, it was tiny. But Joe seemed to like small rooms. Everywhere I went, even if Joe was in a big room he'd make it small, by making a bunker. Even if he lived in a massive complex he'd somehow manage to create a little cubicle where he'd pin up all his bits and pieces and influences, lyrics....it was like a montage of what was going on in his head, and the world. That's what I loved about Joe

– his world didn't end at the bottom of his street, he was always on the runway looking around the whole planet, it wasn't about me and my tiny space, he could relate it to other people. Because it's got to be said that people like Joe and John, particularly Joe were like the punk intelligentsia, they were the thinkers. They were the ones that gave it the depth. With Joe there was no mistaking that early on that my man was deep, no two ways about it. He knew all the cultural and literary references, all the revolutionary references and he put it all into context, he wasn't just an angry young man stamping and screaming. As you can see in his lyrics you've got to maintain that. There's a lot more ideas in one of Joe's rhyming couplets than there are in some peoples' albums. He could put words side by side and create massive favourites. The other day I had to vote for my top 10 favourite Clash tunes, and I consciously put This is England, which was out not in the main Clash period. All due respect to Paul and Mick, but it has to be said that Joe's strength was his lyrics, and with or without those guys his strength was always going to be fucking lyrics. I've said it before: Joe seemed to be one of those people who understood the part of music in social development...of the same lineage as Woody Guthrie, Lennon and Dylan and Scott Heron and Bob Marley, I'd put Joe right in that lineage. Because he really understood the part that music played. Because one thing I've come to understand now I'm 47 is the social function that music has played in all of our lives. It's undeniable. Just

the fact that I have my head still into contemporary things, it's all through music. School and government and religion hasn't done that. Music has really, for a certain amount of people, brought us together.

CS: All our generation.

DL: It's a beautiful thing. People used to say to me 'music doesn't affect change, it reflects change', and I'm not sure if I agree. How many people after they saw The Pistols...were inspired like The Clash? And after people saw The Clash how many people went out the next day and formed bands? That's an effect, it's not a reflection. What was my point? Joe's lyrics. I think he more than anyone moved the lyrical goalposts of what contemporary music could deal with. Obviously there had been protest songs and anti-establishment songs before, but Joe did it in a way that made it sound exciting and didn't make it sound over-earnest. And humorous as well. Because let's face it, it's about the way you tell 'em, you've got to capture peoples' imagination before you give them the serious input, and he had a great understanding of that. You couldn't stand on your soapbox and beat them over the head, but you could maybe tantalise them with a great dance beat and then give them the message.....I remember when I first saw them, the power and energy... I didn't actually hear what they were saying, well, no-one could understand what Joe was saying, but

you knew something was going on, it was so fucking intense. It just made you want to be involved, and not this fan thing, like I say, it made you realise that you could be part of this too. And I think the important thing about the whole legacy of Joe is keeping it real and not mythologizing him, because he realised that you too could do it, in that sort of reggae way where if you've got the balls and the idea you can have a go, constantly there's loads of people having a go in Jamaica. And Joe showed me and lots of other people that same thing – shut up and get on with it.

CS: So how is his attitude in this different to Mick's at this particular juncture? What did they each bring?

DL: It's like Mick was the sugar on the pill. I remember the dynamic between them. I'm about to embark on this Gil Scott Heron thing, and it's the same thing, Gill's got these intense words, but again it's how you tell them. People don't like it too hard and direct, they like the pill to be sweetened. So Gill got this guy, I can't remember his bloody name, to put melody to his really hard and politicised lyrics. And Mick did the same thing, he sweetened the pill. And Mick contemporised Joe's eternal message...Mick was the melody man, the music man, and he would keep it contemporary. Joe reminds me of those guys that were on horses when everyone else was still riding around on cars, and

I found that an admirable quality, but it was Mick that dragged.....I mean, the things that Joe says are things that have always needed to be said and still needed to be said, but if you don't say it in a way that's going to entertain the people...So I think Mick was a crucial foil to Joe. Because if Joe was doing those lyrics without that music, I think people would have been turned off.

CS: Yeah, and also the musical wit.

DL: What did Joe say about Mick? He had Radio 2 tendencies. Mick can come up with a melody faster than anyone I've ever seen in my whole fucking life and he throws them away, and I guess Joe would have been quite instrumental in squashing some of the Radio 2 tendencies and making them harder. Because Mick, if someone didn't hold the reins he could disappear up his own bottom by being too melodic and too sugared.

CS: ....I always thought that second BAD album was great, and that song 'Beyond the Pale' would have been a great hit single, but they wouldn't release it as a single.

DL: That's the one that Joe produced isn't it? ...You know how he ended up producing that? I fucking ran into him in the street and I say

'come and say hello to Mick', Mick comes down and the next thing I know Joe was producing the album! It was a beautiful thing....it's almost like watching two lovers re-acquaint. Because they were lovers in a creative way, and it was beautiful seeing them re-acquaint in that way, and I just stood back and let them get on with it. There were songs I'd written and Joe came in and changed all the lyrics. He was cool, and I felt privileged to see that going on. Because they did do that firemans' thing, but seeing them do that was special, I almost let them do it to the detriment of the record, if it was the vehicle by which they could re-acquaint. But again, Joe came down there and changed the whole studio into his bunker. I remember me and Joe driving down one night to watch the Ally Pally burn down. You've got to say this about Joe, I guess other people have told you about this as well, he'd get anybody to do anything even though they didn't want to do it, that energy he had, that look that was full of promise. And we drove there....

CS: When was this? When you were in Forrest Hill? That's a long way!

DL: Yeah! I remember him getting me and Leo to drive him to see some funk festival in the middle of England. I couldn't give a shit about funk music, but sure enough Joe and that amazing energy got us

to drive all the way there and drive all the way back.....there are so many examples, like that time when we had 11 people trying to get somewhere, and here's the Morris Minor, and Joe was like 'fuck it, we can all get in there'. And sure enough there's like 10,11 people in the fucking Morris Minor! At some point you'd go 'what am I doing?', but you just went with it. And he did that wherever he went. I went on holiday with him Spain, and he'd get the whole fucking village jumping up and down and getting them to do sing-songs and stay up 'til 4 in the morning and do things they would never have done. Interesting on holiday, Mick and Paul were there and all our families, everyone was on the beach, and wherever he went he'd make this bunker, so they had somebody's garage where they parked their car, and sure enough Joe turned that into a Heath Robinson kind of studio.

CS: Did you have any sense from when Joe decided to be a rock and roll star?

DL: I'm guessing this is all pre-me, 101ers, I guess when he changed his name to Woody. I didn't see the 101ers unfortunately.

CS: Weren't you at that gig when they supported the Sex Pistols? At the Nashville?

DL: What? That was the 101ers? I don't remember them, I only remember the Pistols. That night John had on a 'I hate Pink Floyd' T-shirt.

CS: Anyway, was there any sense of attitude-shifting: 'I'm becoming a rock star'?

DL: Not to me. To my mind he was always like 'man of the people' vibe. Except, the thing is we've all got to be honest about Joe here, now that Joe's dead and gone it's easy to look at him through rose-tinted glasses, but he definitely had a bastard side to him. There was something about Joe, which he alluded to in 'Westway to the World' is how when he wanted something horrible done he'd get other people to do it in a real Machiavellian way, when things happened that he couldn't deal with. And he had a kind of cowardly streak about him as well. I ain't pointing the finger, because this is all part of Joe's humanity, the contradictions. Because he was so extreme it was more noticeable....

Contradictory as well, say one thing and doesn't mean. But you know what? I dug him. Even when he nicked my girlfriend, we never spoke for a year or so...but even then in a perverse way I dug it, I don't know if I can explain that. If ever there was the wrong thing to do you could count on Joe doing it, I almost dug that. There was a kind of bright

energy of youth that's more exciting than the philosophising that we tend to do as we get older.

CS: But what was interesting was that everyone's always giving him the benefit of the doubt, for example the Us festival where he said he wouldn't pay unless they gave money to the poor Latinos of LA....

DL: Well, I think they had a track record of trying, I mean come on. These were the guys that when Jenner's doing their tour budget, and he's like 'well if you want to do all this you're going to end up losing' and they were like 'well, we can't cheat the fans', and then they did the double album which they wanted to sell for the single album price, and then they did the triple, which all...this ain't no bullshit, it came out of their money. And I think that people knew that maybe he didn't get it right all the time but it wasn't for the want of trying, and sometimes he did shoot himself in the foot, but I think people would give him the benefit of the doubt, because of course you can't get it right all the time, so there were these odd contradictions, but as I say I think that added to Joe's humanity. Who gets it right all the time? I don't trust people that get it right all the time. Just like I don't trust bands that go on for more than 7 or 8 years. It has to be said. This whole thing of them breaking up, I think they broke up when they had to break up. It was what they were supposed to do. Most great bands have a life-span

of about 7 or 8 years. And the exceptions, the U2s and the Stones, it seems that all they really do is go on to destroy their own credibility. The Jeannette thing was a trip, I've got to say, I ain't going to lie about that. It was all more power for the chords, there was a drama about it, we weren't all patting each other on the back saying 'wasn't it great?' It wasn't all great.

CS: How did you see Bonds?

DL: Bonds was such a fucking trip I cannot tell you, and I wish....the weed that we were smoking back in those days in New York. We thought the weed was as good here, but....so consequently a lot of this has gone out of focus through a marijuana haze. Luckily I filmed some of it. Just the shows themselves, 17 or 18 shows back to back,.....it was a trip man. And literally for those 2 weeks they ran New York City. There's no two ways about it. Scorsese and De Niro turning up. The Clash are doing crazy things...because when they were in America they were perceived as a rock band. All those white mid-Western rock bands turning up. What did the Clash do? They showed them ...Grandmaster Flash. These white people weren't in to their musical education - they were into rock. And I have to say, they got this from Bernie, he always had this thing where the line-up had to be culturally interesting. To the point of having one of the guys from the Sandinistas

on one of the shows doing readings. Can you imagine all those red-neck kids....? I mean you look at black music and the effect it has had today on American popular culture, and The Clash had a lot to do with forcing that down their throats. Because they wouldn't have been listening to that otherwise. And then there was things like WBLS, essentially a black New York station, picking up on Mag Dance ..... everywhere in New York that was the soundtrack. The Hispanics were into it, the blacks were into it. They weren't quite sure what it was. But it was a kicking track on the radio.... and again all power to Joe, the musicianship of The Clash, and the fact that they were so willing to explore...they were like a cultural sponge, they absorbed what they thought was relevant and put it through The Clash filter and made it something of their own. Consequently you can't fault them musically.

CS: But when we're talking about the music we're talking about Mick largely?

DL: Absolutely. I think what Joe picked up on was the street politics, and he could see where that married. Joe could relate to the common factors...like he could look at an emerging punk rock scene, and make a correlation between what they were doing and what he was doing. Because essentially hip-hop is black punk rock. They had no instruments....and in the same way that punk rock was a complete sub-

culture, it had its poets, filmmakers, photographer...hip-hop was the same thing. So Joe could make the cultural and social connection, whereas Mick would make the musical connection, and that was down to Mick, almost to the point where it was too much for Paul and Joe. Mick had a great foresight to see where contemporary sounds were going. They say he was driven out of the band for rock star behaviour, and I maintain that we need our rock stars to have a bit of rock star behaviour. Who else is going to do it? But I think it was classic musical differences. I remember Paul used to take the piss out of this guitar that Mick had that was some kind of synthesiser thing, and Paul used to call it a Dalek's handbag. I think Paul and Joe were into the contemporary thing but they were a little slower on the uptake. Mick would throw himself in and totally embrace it....

CS: I don't think they were totally happy with the hip-hop thing actually..

DL: They used to call Mick Lack-attack. Yeah, I mean you can't fault Mick for trying to boldly go where no rock band has gone before, and I think they did it fucking great. When they did the reggae stuff....and the hip-hop, and the Latin-y rhythms that were coming off the street. I think Joe realised that the people who were most inventive were the people who had the least.

CS: Yeah, it's like that line of his about the truth being known by guttersnipes, and that's why he always surrounded himself with...

DL: That's it, if you had time to listen to what they were saying and decipher the drunken babble I guess there was a message in there. I guess it's my snobbery looking at these drunken, stoned people and thinking that it's babbling, but maybe there is a politic in there if you've got the time.....(tape turns over)...produced a really basic sound, .... that does make a kind of sense, that if you talked to all these people Joe could get an idea of what was really going on, as opposed to highbrow politics that was removed from what we always used to talk about which was the day-to-day thing of 'how are we actually going to fucking live?' And furthermore, Joe always used to say 'how are we going to do it together?'. You know, all these stadium bands, they had nothing to do with how they lived on a day-to-day basis. We were all into music that had an agenda, we all realised that music can entertain, but at the same time it can inspire and enlighten.....When I used to take Joe and John to all these reggae clubs they would literally be the only white people on the dance floor in 4 Aces or Colombos. Here we are 25 years later – you go to Shaka now it's 50% black, 20% white, 20% Asian, 10% Greek or something, I've seen that cultural change happen in my lifetime.

CS: What did you think when you heard that he'd got rid of Mick?

DL: Interesting. I think this was something that was bubbling while they were in the Electric Ladyland period, after Bonds or something. I get it all mixed-up. Mick was getting in to his hip-hop and....and it wasn't just that. I mean come on, Mick can be a difficult bastard. What did Joe say in the film? 'Elizabeth Taylor on a bad hair day'.

CS: But then, as we said, Joe could be a bastard. Isn't this a bit of a case of the pot calling the kettle black? Because most people I've talked to say he was fucking nuts to do this. He was bonkers at that point.

DL: Ye-ah....mmm...I think, as an outsider, it seemed to me that there were things that Mick would do that would annoy Paul and Joe. I know that from doing BAD.

CS: Like being late.

DL: Yeah, that's one of them, definitely. And then that compounded with....

CS: Well what were the other things?

DL: ...wilful, prima donna business one would have to say, and Mick would have to admit to that, he regularly does. But again, they all had their faults, maybe not Paul, Paul seemed to walk this line of being very upright, ...but Mick didn't have any back-up whereas Joe did in Bernie. So on top of Mick annoying Paul and Joe anyway, on top of that there's Bernie. So then you've got Bernie giving that madness some shape and form and making it seem like it was an intellectual decision. He was goaded on by Bernie, that's how I see it.

And it has to be said, that was one of Joe's faults – he could be directed by a manager and also by women sometimes, he'd tell you one thing and then he'd go in the next room and somebody would say something else and he'd be there. And he'd hope that you two wouldn't meet.

But whenever I dealt with them they were always pretty unified. I've got to say when I was doing Bonds, I didn't see any problems. I remember one time when we were doing the Rock the Casbah video and there was something going on, and I knew this because they all decided to....they've all got their urban military style combats on, and Mick comes out in a pair of red long johns. Mick's a skinny man, he had red long johns and Doc Marten boots. He looked like a fucking matchstick. And what was going on really was that there was some problem between him and the rest of the guys, and that was Mick

going 'fuck you'. And he looked really stupid. I had to pull him aside and say 'Mick, you might be mad at somebody, but when people see this video they're not going to know that, what they're going to say is 'how come they've got a matchstick man in the band?' And I eventually convinced him to wear the combat gear, but he was still pissed off, so he wore this mask. Coz he didn't want to partake. Turns out that the mask looks quite cool and at the end of the video Joe whips it off. But he was actually pissed off about something, and that was the only time that I realised....mind you, now I come to think of it, when we did the Call-up video, everyone looks kind of cool. We were doing it at Chris Farlow's place, he had this military shop in Islington, and we did it in the back of that building. So all the guys went out and picked out the military gear and looks quite cool, and Mick goes in and he picks up a leopard fur thing and puts it over his shoulders and these John Lennon dark glasses. Again it looks good, but I remember the others looking at me 'who the fuck does he think he is?'

CS: So when you heard Mick had gone, what did you think of Joe?

DL: Well, you know what's funny, I should tell you this as well. When Mick got kicked out I was still in America working on Clash on Broadway, because I got a phone call from Paul saying 'we've had to get rid of Mick. And if you are going to stay friends with Mick you

can't really stay friends with us'. And I felt really bad for Paul, because I knew what had happened: Bernie and Joe must have gone 'well, Don's your mate' and The Clash party line was getting into shape. And Paul was obviously made to do this call. And I said 'well, sorry Paul, but the very fact that you're saying that is a decision in itself. I'm not like that, so if I don't see you for a while so be it'. And in fact we didn't speak for a little while, and I stayed friends with Mick...I remember sitting in a bar, I think I was in LA for some peculiar reason, I was sitting on my own in a bar, and the fucking video came up on MTV, and I'd just got this phone call, and I remember it brought a tear to my eye.

CS: I was very upset. I thought 'this is bonkers'.

DL: But then maybe not, because they'd done their 7-year cycle. I don't know, if they'd gone on they might have been around long enough to destroy their legacy.

CS: Joe did seem to have this pattern of a kind of Stalinist or Pol Pot-like breaking with the past.

DL: It seemed like the sort of thing that Joe would always do anyway, just as success is about to embrace him, he'd make a left turn and

destroy it. I don't know what that was about.

CS: But you obviously saw him after The Clash in the mid-eighties...how did he seem to you?

DL: He was like the cowboy that's lost his horse, wasn't he? Was that the period where he was dabbling in the film scripts and soundtracks, he's acting a bit and all this stuff...he looked like a cowboy that's lost his horse. And he kept trying to surround himself with people that were like the rest of The Clash, and it never seemed to work because there was this constant turn-over.

CS: But there was a lot of stuff going on, he was making slightly inappropriate decisions....

DL: He was treading water, knowing that he wasn't going to find that again. He was in a musical, creative wilderness. And being misled by lots of people that wanted to attach themselves to Joe. And getting involved in some dodgy projects and some good things. I mean the soundtrack to Walker was brilliant, the film, sorry Alex but.....

CS: The Permanent Record music is great.

DL: I'd love to hear the stuff that he did with the Grid guy. But it was definitely a wilderness, and he was definitely lost, you can tell by the sort of projects he attached himself to, there wasn't any method....

CS: No, it was like jumping from one thing to another.

DL: I think it was a way of not dealing with what he was supposed to be dealing with. The thing I loved about Joe, when I did the videos and things, he just let me get on with that...

CS: Yeah, he was really....I went out to do a piece on him for the Telegraph magazine, and he cancelled all his US press to do the stuff with me.

DL: Yeah, I think he identified people who were down with him. We were speaking the same language, it wasn't a question of not stitching him up, we were just speaking the same language, and on the same wavelength. Even when we didn't see each other for a year or so. The other thing I love about Joe is that when you saw him, whenever you saw him, it was like rah-rah-rah, great! But I knew that the minute I wasn't in front of his face I did not fucking exist.

CS: Well that's probably not the case...

DL:...I'm not faulting it. With Joe I just got the feeling that what existed is what was directly in front of him. Are you going to speak to Kosmo? I hope he talks. I rang him 3 times for Westway to the World. And he said 'if Bernie's not doing it, I'm not doing it'. Which I thought was fucking stupid. Really. Allegiance to Bernie? What's Bernie doing now? He basically wrote himself out of the story, which I thought was a real shame.....Bernie: in the middle of all his madness there are these little gems. I learnt a lot from Malcolm, and Bernie, it has to be said, if you can decipher the bullshit there's a lot going on there, these guys have got a good history of contemporary culture and a bigger overview than myself.

CS: And an iconoclastic view.

DL: Yeah. I remember once Bernie said to me 'if you use the word 'revolution' in a song it's a real turn-off'.

CS: OK, so listen, what's Joe's relationship with Bernie. Is he a father figure? What is he?

DL: I think Joe respected where Bernie had been and was coming from and dug the fact that Bernie could intellectualise things. And Joe

tapped into that, because I guess there weren't a lot of people he could have that kind of exchange with. He could sit there and talk about historical, political, literary....I think he got on with Bernie because of Bernie's cultural knowledge and depth, I guess. I think a lot of us were into the more obvious, superficial things that were in our faces. Bernie could talk about things like the fucking situationists and things like that, whereas me and Mick and Paul, maybe our culture started from the 60s onwards. Bernie had a bigger overview. He knew about people politics. But whenever I saw Bernie it was always 'with The Clash', I never really saw the personal....he always seemed to have Joe in his pocket, and Mick was always suspicious of Bernie.

CS: Joe could be quite naive as well, couldn't he?

DL: Definitely, Joe would sometimes be in a situation where he would just go with the flow, to the point where it was embarrassing.

CS: Like how?

DL: Like he'd have a deep conversation with you about one thing and say 'this is shit', and then he'd go and somebody would say....actually as a good example I'm just looking at that GQ, and there's a little quote from someone who says 'Joe, what do you think of world music?' and

Joe says 'it's fucking rubbish, innit?' and Joe walks away from the guy, walks over to the stage and then says 'and here we are for the world music festival, isn't it great?'

CS: Yeah, it's like apparently he told somebody 'never buy a house that a plumber couldn't buy' – did he realise how much plumbers earn?

DL: No really! I was doing a film lecture the other day, and someone said 'have you got any advice for young film-makers?' and I said 'yeah, learn to be a plumber'.

CS: So in fact even in that statement there's classic Joe ambivalence.

DL: Yeah, because he had a romantic view of what plumbers were. He was a great romanticist, undoubtedly, to the point of being ridiculous almost.

CS: You don't have any of his drawings do you?

DL: A couple lying around. I've got this funny charge sheet from when he got busted on the White Riot tour for stealing hotel pillows, and I've actually got this towel somewhere where he's drawn a skull and cross-bones on it.

CS: What he's doing with the Mescaleros, what do you feel about that?

DL: Well, it's a classic problem isn't it, when you leave a fucking great band and they cast a shadow over everything you do from then on.

Initially I guess that people were wanting to be The Clash, but it seemed over the last three years that they were actually finding their own feet. I was fortunate enough to see some of the shows, and I think when they first started the set would be half Clash half Mescaleros, but as it went on they needed The Clash songs less and less to make the show work. I filmed the Brixton gig and it was fucking great. Joe had the lean, mean young kids behind him who could play fantastically who were the bedrock who he could do his lyrical stuff over, and it's a drag because it looked like they were finally becoming a band, they were like 'we're the Mescaleros', as opposed to 'Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros', and that's kind of sad too, and I just heard four tracks from the album, and wouldn't you know it? I couldn't believe how radio-friendly the tracks were. Normally you'd hear the album and there's like 'that's the radio track', but this one....it's sod's law. It must have been hard for Joe to know, no disrespect to the Mescaleros, but that they would never reach the dizzy heights of The Clash again, and that's got to be a hard thing to deal with, but you know that there's a kind of middle ground that you would never actually get out of.

CS: Yeah, but apparently Joe had decided to go for it, all the way. I think that had he been around this album would have been a big album, and I think maybe 2 or 3 albums down the line he'd get some fucking 10 million seller.

DL: Yeah, well I was saying he wouldn't reach those dizzy heights, but there is something interesting about the middle ground whereby if you want all that the man's offering you can't really do that much, you've got to play the game, and the nature of Joe, and his music that has this agenda, they're almost relegated to this weird middle ground, and maybe you're better off not selling 10 million but selling a million but at least you're saying what you want to say. It's something he could have embraced and made something substantial. Most of the people that me and you are turned on by aren't on Top of the Pops, because music has these things that you can operate and be successful in and do what you want to do. Let's face it, Joe was never going to do the Saturday morning kiddy shows, and he was never going to do the Sunday glossy magazines, and that in and of itself relegates you to a certain position.

CS: I think he would have been prepared to do that.

DL: Well, I tell you what, he might have been prepared to do it, but they wouldn't have wanted him, because he wouldn't have wanted to grin and....they don't want you to say anything. They don't want you to say anything that deep....it's that little bit too serious for him.

Personally I'd rather see him at the Shepherd's Bush Empire than at some fucking big stadium. I remember Joe saying to me 'if you can't see the whites of their eyes it ain't happening'. So there is something attractive about that middle ground that allows you to be who you want to be. When we got into music and The Clash it was an anti-establishment thing, and the people who are successful now are the people who want to be part of the establishment, and that's the major crucial difference between the music that's created now, and back then I think. People are so desperate to be part of the system now. Joe was never going to do that, no matter how he felt, he can't help it, he can't keep his mouth shut, if there's a cause or something to shout about Joe's got to fucking shout. It's the nature of what he is. Anything that makes people have a prick of the conscience they turn off. There's plenty of other people willing to jump around like buffoons on stage and have choreographers and stylists, that are so eager to fill that spot for them. They wouldn't have let Joe in there anyway. People like Lou Reed, you know that other space I'm talking about? That's credible, it sells, they can live...he's not starving, is he? Lou Reed? He didn't play that game...actually we say that but later on he did do ads

for speakers and things, but what I'm saying is that there's a space outside....

CS: Well The Clash advertised Jaguar cars with London calling in the United States.

DL: Yeah, Should I Stay or Should I Go? on Levi's. It's funny how 'turning rebellion into money'... an artist can be responsible for his art but he can't be responsible for how it gets re-interpreted years later.

CS: I didn't have a problem with them doing those ads. It meant more people heard them.

DL: Yeah, coz X amount of people will pick up the vibe and pass on the albums....Joe had this thing about changing the world, and maybe he didn't change the world, but he did change a lot of people. And the fact is that people are the world. Coz when you're young you want to change the world, but if you can just affect the geezer next door it's a fucking good start. And Joe was definitely of that school that didn't change the world but changed a lot of fucking people. Strummer: he could draw fast, shoot straight and he didn't hit the bystanders. It's from some Western, some cowboys says to another cowboy, tell me about this young, up-and-coming gunslinger, have you got any advice?

And he says 'draw fast, shoot straight, and don't hit the by-standers'.

It's a classic line and I thought it was perfect for Joe.

But Joe would fall in with anyone who would seem to help him forward, even if they were totally inappropriate. If they had the energy to do what he didn't want to deal with he would just go with them. To his detriment in a lot of cases I would say.....so why is it that Joe could get that kind of devotion from people? Coz he did get this devotion that I didn't see from anyone else.

CS: Jon Savage said something quite astute, he said that there was a side of Joe that was a bit of a loser...and that touched people.

DL: Yeah, he did have a sort of downward...yeah, that's interesting, a sort of British thing, coz if someone keeps winning you almost get fed up with them, but the losers are always more intriguing.....I've never seen anybody get so much love from people.

