

## **Trevor Beattie**

### **Advertising Industry Legend**

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**Welcome to Media Masters, a series of one-to-one interviews with people at the top of the media game. Today I'm joined by the British advertising legend, Trevor Beattie. He's responsible for creating some of the most talked-about campaigns of all time, including the 'Hello Boys' campaign for Wonderbra, and FCUK for French Connection. Trevor is also a movie producer, including the BAFTA-winning sci-fi movie Moon starring Sam Rockwell, and feature-length documentaries on subjects such as the dancer Rudolf Nureyev, and the Spitfire. In 2011, he established the Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation, which supports victims of social injustice by providing grants under the themes of dignity, freedom and sanctuary.**

**Trevor, thank you for joining me.**

Good to see you, Paul.

**Trevor, it's no secret that you're a bit of a legend in the advertising industry. How did you get started in it?**

By watching the telly, really. I think I was more interested in the adverts than the programmes, and I used to sing the jingles. I was kind of obsessed with adverts. Looking back, I didn't realise I was at the time, but looking back, I was. And me and my brothers would sing the jingles as much as we'd sing pop songs. Never, of course, knew there was such a job as that. It took a long time for that to sink in.

**I'm obsessed with news presentation, as it's called. The music countdown for BBC News.**

Do you know, our dad, bless him, had a phrase which was, "Be quiet for the news." And I was talking to my brother about it recently, and it's never been more relevant. Whenever we were making a racket, kicking stuff around the living room, our dad would always say, "Be quiet for the news." And that's what I do now – and to be fair, I think that's what everyone does now.

**Be dumbfounded by the news. Be incredulous.**

Everybody's totally quiet with their gobs open for the news. So, Jack Beattie would love today. If he was still with us, he'd love the news. My favourite phrase about the current news is that we're "receiving news via fire hose in the face". Really how I feel I'm getting it.

**I like that.**

It's just extraordinary, it won't stop going, and there's no longer time to be outraged or to analyse.

**I've got 'outrage fatigue'.**

Yes. But I think that's the intention. I think that if you do that, if you're on the deliverer's end of the fire hose, you can put as much outrageous stuff in there as you want, because you know it doesn't have time to stick any more.

**Well, that's Trump's genius, if you could call it that. I mean, obviously I'm a very strong critic of the guy, but things that would have finished off any other president don't even last a full news cycle.**

Continually, and that's been the pattern of his presidential career, that we've thought that, "This is the one." I guess we've stopped thinking, "This will do for him now." But certainly I remember during the election campaign, I had several moments where I thought, "Well, he's toast now. That's it."

**Oh, "Grab them by the pussy." I loved that, because I thought, "Well, that is game over for him now."**

And the amount of times I saw that meme of the steam train crashing off the bridge, the Little American clip. Because every time something happened, we would all collectively say, "That's it, he's done now. The train's hit the buffers."

**John Oliver has a meme thing that he does every so often, every couple of weeks, and he presses a button that says 'We Got Him' where things drop from the ceiling, balloons. And then he says, "No, we haven't. No, we haven't."**

That's right. I love John.

**He's a total legend. So come on, then. You've done the politicians' answer then and basically avoided the question.**

Oh, yes, sorry, I've rambled off! Adverts. So, we were a family of eight kids, although in our period there were me and two younger brothers, really. The rest had all gone off and got married. And I loved adverts. Used to sing adverts, used to draw... I think I used to call them 'the cartoons', really. They were 'the cartoons'. So, for me there was always a blur between the programmes and the adverts, and it was all entertainment, really. And I think that probably shaped my advertising career, in that I

thought of it as branded entertainment. I'm sure I said that was four, to my brother Pete. "Hey Pete, be quiet..."

**They use these phrases like that to charge a lot of money.**

"Pete, there's some branded entertainment on the telly. Let's watch this."

**In my business, we talk about "thought leadership collateral".**

That's great.

**But it's just speeches and videos and stuff.**

The content word. Content's great, isn't it?

**Please make the cheques payable to P. Blanchard, or cash for a 10% discount.**

Yes, so I just loved the adverts. And it's funny how in advertising, I guess I don't know about it today, but in the world of advertising I've rapidly found out that everyone else who worked in the business kind of hated the business, which for me was just extraordinary. Or maybe hated is too strong a word, but they were a little bit ashamed of working in advertising. Because when I arrived in London, I was a stranger in a strange land. I was a long-haired git from Birmingham who knew nothing, and everyone was posh. Everyone was middle class. Everyone. And they had a kind of shame about having to work in advertising, and they were biding their time, they were putting up with it. Whereas I loved it, relished it. Every day I thought, "This is tremendous fun." I never felt ashamed to work in Adland, it was great. That was really apparent to me that that's how people felt. And then there was a big influx of working-class kids came in, through the polytechnics becoming universities and all of that. And now it's come full circle, because now everyone's posh again. Because if you're a kid from Leeds or Birmingham you can't afford to come to London and sleep on floors and hopefully get a job.

**It's why I pay all my interns, because I genuinely think of it to be morally wrong to have this... we get a lot of people starting with us that have had a litany of unpaid internships. And all it does it mean that kids from poorer families can't make their start, first rung on the ladder in London. It's wrong.**

Absolutely appalling. And so now you have internships auctioned by posh people at posh events so that their kids can get in. It's just noticeably posh. Adland is noticeably posh again, which is a flashback to when I first arrived. So, it's kind of come full circle again.

**I'm council house scum, but I aspire to be posh.**

Oh, I wouldn't aspire. You don't do that, Paul.

**Maybe just a few more bob in the bank, then.**

That's all right, yes. That's different, then. You can't always equate money with poshness.

**You're right. You can take the lad out of Yorkshire, but you can't take the Yorkshire out of the lad.**

Bloody right, yes, yes.

**What came next, then? How did you go from that to being a legend?**

(Laughs)

**You are a bit of a legend, are you in denial of that? You are probably the biggest name in advertising in this country, surely.**

I don't know, I doubt that.

**I think that's real modesty rather than false modesty. I'm really good at false modesty, but it's false. But that seems to me to be real modesty, which is something I need to learn from you.**

Ah, god! Too busy getting on with stuff to contemplate your own position in the universe. It's not important.

**Well, what was the first rung on the ladder, then? So you came to London. What was your first job in advertising?**

I only got into advertising because of a guy called John Lowe, who was my lecturer at Wolverhampton Polytechnic – hello, John – where I did graphic design. In the final term, I realised that everyone was actually better at drawing than me, but I was a bit better at writing than them. So I was writing adverts and doing some dodgy layouts. So he said, "You know what? There's such a job called copywriting, in advertising," and I'd never heard of it. And he put me up for this placement scholarship thing at an ad agency.

**Because you were famously penniless when you arrived in London.**

Damn right. I was penniless for bloody years! The first job I got I was on 4,500 pounds. I don't want to do the "Woe is me, we lived in a bucket" thing, but...

**Yes. You were lucky.**

Lucky! Four and a half grand.

**Luxury!**

Try living on four and a half grand in Holborn Circus.

**That would barely get you a latte now, wouldn't it?**

That's right! So yes, I got this job, and got sneered upon by the people in the agency. It was this all-singing, all-dancing agency called ABM, and they did bizarre things like, "Call it Ridley's, call it spearmint, call it gum," and Toblerone, and, "This is the age of the train," and all that stuff. This flamboyant character called Peter Marsh, god bless him, incredible character. We used to rehearse our pitch presentations, and he used to wear white gloves handling the boards. Fascinating character. Anyway, the first campaign I did was for Weetabix, and that kind of projected me into a different place, really. We won the account and it was very successful. My original end line for that was "A box full of little bastards." And they said, "No, you can't do that." I couldn't understand why they wouldn't let me do that, and animated these little soggy biscuits. Because no one ate Weetabix. No one still does, do they? It's bloody awful stuff.

**I don't. I eat Shredded Wheat.**

Exactly. It's just stodge, you don't want to eat Weetabix. And kids didn't want to eat Weetabix, because it didn't have any sugar in it either, so there's no reason they wanted to eat it.

**I mean, that's the thing we've all learnt recently over the last 10 years, is that cereals are terrible. The worst thing in the world.**

Yes, that's right, actually. Yes. And so, we made them these little thugs, and it just really worked. They wouldn't let me do "A box full of little bastards," and so I then tried "Full of natural badness," and they wouldn't let me do that, and then we ended up with "If you know what's good for you," and it just worked. So, that was fun.

**And was that the first time you realised that genuine innovation is risks being poo-pooed by an adventurous client? Because I've pitched things to clients before where I've thought that's a really good idea, and frankly they've just not had the appetite for it. They want to play safe too much. And you end up doing something that's a bit insipid, because they don't have the balls, frankly.**

It's kind of the story of a career in advertising, creatively. You're spending half your life creating something, and half your life convincing someone else that that creation is worthwhile and will be a success to their business. That's what I learned from advertising, to do that, the diplomacy of it, really. One of the tricks is to give away ideas. Adland probably does it too much, but don't be precious about ideas. And if you can convince a client that they had the idea, you're off to the races. There's a lot of so-called creative people who wouldn't do that because, "It's my idea and I will die in a ditch with my idea," whereas if you just have an idea and you're throwing it around... I would always refer to an idea as "Yours" when I'm talking to the client. "So, Bob, with your idea here, what we..." You know? Because they were as much, not part of creating it, but part of understanding, endorsing and carrying it. So, if you have that kind of collective ownership of an idea, there's more chance of it flying. Instead of this conflict, the cliché of the conflict, of "I'm the lofty creative, I've had this

idea and you will buy it, and if you don't buy it..." Buy it is an interesting phrase, as well. "If you don't buy it then you're a moron." Well, it'll get you nowhere, really.

**We use the word 'invest' now, rather than 'cost'.**

Oh, that's nice.

**It's very Blairite, actually.**

Yes, that's nice. But no, I didn't enjoy that conflict thing of, "I've had an idea and you must run it." So, the more collegiate you could get about it, the better, I think.

**And at this point did you already know that advertising was for you, then?  
There was a joy to it?**

Yes, bloody loved it.

**I mean, some of the campaigns you've worked on have been legendary. 'Hello Boys', FCUK. How do you do that, creatively? Because my best ideas come to me when I'm not distracted by endless emails and things, like when I'm driving somewhere, or when I'm in the shower. When I haven't got my phone in front of me.**

But that's literally how ideas happen. With me, I've learnt to blackmail myself to have ideas.

**How do you do that?**

A lot of different ways.

**If you don't do this, you'll release the photos to the media yourself.**

Kind of, kind of. I used to write a little column for the Guardian, and I was so terrified of having to write it, knowing that people like Julie Burchill would be on the next page. It's such a terrifying concept, that I used to check myself into an expensive hotel and pay it, and I would get paid the same amount. So, I'd get paid by the Guardian, and I would use that money to buy a room at the hotel to write the column, so I could do nothing else. So, I'd lock myself in this room in a hotel and write the piece. But what I mean by blackmail yourself is that... I'm a gardener, I've always been a gardener. And if you've got an important piece of work to do, don't confront it, run away from it, and make the thing come to you. So, what I mean by that is if I'm out in the garden and I'm saying to myself, "No, I'm not going to write that thing. Sod it. I've got more important things to do, I've got roses to prune, so I'm going to go and do this," you'll find that your brain, the idea, will say, "No, no, you must come and write this thing." And I'm saying, "No, I don't want to. I've got important things. I can't do it, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to do this instead." And your brain, in my case, will say, "Honestly, mate, if you come indoors you can have this idea." And I'll say, "No, I'm not. No, I'm going to do this gardening." "No, please, come indoors because you've

got this to do.” It’ll fire an idea into your brain, and then you’ll come running indoors and write it down, versus sitting in front of a blank sheet of paper and demanding that your brain creates an idea. So, it’s a kind of reverse psychology. If you demand that your brain has an idea, you won’t have an idea. But if you tell your brain that you’re not going to have an idea, you’re going to do something else, your brain, god this is a metaphor, but your brain will tap you on the shoulder and say... does that make sense? Your brain will tap you on the shoulder and say, “If you come indoors, we can have this idea. I’ll come to a deal with you. We’ll have this idea.”

**How do you do it with a team, though? You’ve built teams.**

You don’t do that with a team.

**But how do you do a brainstorming session?**

Don’t believe in them.

**Is it the cliché of there’s a football and you throw it around?**

No, I don’t believe in that.

**So there’s no ‘talking stick’.**

Ha ha! I don’t believe in the talking stick. You can stick the talking stick where the sun don’t shine. But I believe in teamwork. So, I believe in pairs. So, in advertising you would traditionally work in pairs. Whether they’re called art director and copywriter, or designer and typographer, it doesn’t really matter. But if you work as a pair, that’s the teamwork for me where sparks can fly. But I believe that an idea, when created by two people, is an accident. So, when I used to work with Bill, Bill was an art director, he’s my business partner, I worked with Bill for years. So, we would have a misunderstanding. An idea is always, I believe, a misunderstanding. So we’d sit there in silence for a few hours. Again, doing it wrong, because you’re just looking at a blank sheet of paper. And I would say, “I reckon it’s giraffe, isn’t it? It’s giraffe.” And Bill would say, “What? You mean Africa? You’re right, I think it is an African thing.” And I’d say, “No, I meant long. It needs to be long.” And he’d say, “Yes, but if we go to Africa and make it long...” And suddenly you’ve got this bizarre third thing that’s born of a misunderstanding. I think when two people express their ideas to each other, a third thing, the misunderstanding of one another’s thinking is called the idea. I think that’s how it works, as opposed to one person saying, “I have an idea and I’m going to impose my idea on you.” It’s like a game of tennis where, “I have an idea.” “What, you mean this idea?” “No, but I quite like, and taking that. Have this back, with this idea.” But what you then have to do is protect it because then, once you’ve got it, people will try and explain to you what your idea is.

**But, perhaps naively, you might think if an idea’s so good it would stand on its own two feet and wouldn’t need to be justified or explained.**

I guess, yes. A fully formed idea would be FCUK.

**My first thought when I looked at that was, “Ooh, it’s a rude word.”**

But it’s also the truth. Because it’s French Connection United Kingdom. So, in advertising, it can’t be for anything else, and that’s the key to an advertising idea. If someone says to you, “Oh, have you seen that great ad with the baby panda in?” And you say, “Yes, what’s it for?” And they say, “I don’t know, but that baby panda’s amazing.”

**Then it’s failed, hasn’t it?**

By definition, that’s a shit ad.

**Yes, it’s not moved the needle.**

By definition. I’ve always judged my work by the notion that if you can talk about it, about my work, without mentioning the brand name, then it isn’t a success, and vice versa. So, you can only talk about the FCUK campaign, by saying FCUK, because it has an honesty to it. It’s French Connection United Kingdom, it can’t be for anything else. And the battles that we got into over, “How do I explain this to my child?” really amused me, because unless your child knows the word ‘fuck’, then your child does not know the word FCUK, and I didn’t teach your child the word ‘fuck’. The kids at school did.

**Yes, they did.**

So if a child asks you what that word means, the child knows that it’s the misspelling of the word fuck, and they’re just winding you up, and it’s about time you grew up and stopped being so sensitive. But it has a truth to it. And how do you explain the word FCUK to your child? It’s simple. You say, “It’s an abbreviation, an acronym of French Connection United Kingdom.” You can say that because it’s the truth. Or you could say to your child, “It’s a misspelling of the word ‘fuck’, which is a really rude word, and you must never use.” What’s wrong with that?

**But obviously, even though it is a true, there’s a mischief in doing it because that’s what you want.**

Great word. Mischief is a great word, I’d like to think I’ve built a career on the word ‘mischief’.

**Well, you have.**

I love the word mischief.

**I applaud it.**

That’s exactly what it is. When I worked with Stephen Marks at French Connection, we used to say ‘chalk dust’ a lot. “Chalk dust!” It’s something John McEnroe used to say before... you know, video replays. The ball would hit the line and he’d be in or



out, and he would always shout, “Chalk dust,” because he saw chalk dust. And we would always say that it’s only when an idea hits the line and creates chalk dust that you’ve got the right idea, because it’s within the boundaries, but it creates chalk dust, and I always liken my work to just chalk dust.

**So it’s at the margin, you’re pushing the envelope.**

Yes, that’s right. And if there’s no boundaries, then you can’t do that. If you say, “Well, it’s completely okay to use the word ‘fuck’ in advertising,” then I don’t want that, because then I can’t be mischievous. You’ve got to have the rules and the regulations to balk against, to cause trouble with. That’s the chalk line, the rules and regulations. The ASA, the Advertising Standards people, were the chalk line, and I did as much as I could to disrupt and... not upset them, wind them up. I had some fun conversations with them. An example, early, early days, a thousand years ago, I used to work on 7-Eleven stores when they tried to open in Britain. It was a radio script, and one of the briefs was 7-Eleven are now going to open 24 hours. So I wrote this radio script which said “The Voice of God”. And the voice of God was ruminating on having created the universe and the solar system and everything within it. “There’s one thing I can’t understand, is if they’re open 24 hours, why are they still called 7-Eleven, and not 24?” It was a lovely script, I thought.

**He could also ask the question about the Carphone Warehouse.**

Exactly, exactly. And anyway, this went to the Radio Advertising Standards Bureau, who balked and were appalled.

**Oh, Jesus, if you’ll forgive the pun.**

There you go. Who balked and appalled at the Voice of God reference, and they said to me, “You can record the script, providing you” and I kept the letter from them, it said something like, “Providing you do not make it clear that this is the voice of God,” right?

**Oh, for goodness’ sake.**

Well obviously it’s written down on a script, voice of God, but you don’t read out in the script, “Voice of God.” So, I wrote back to them and said, “It’s perfectly fine. I had a word with her this morning, and she said it’s fine.” And they let me do it. Because it’s like that thing of, you write a script of someone saying, “We see a man walking across the road. He’s worrying about his mortgage.” You go, “How do you know he’s worrying about his mortgage?” The difference between the words on the page and what you actually film. So, someone’s speaking in the voice of God, it’s only in your mind that it’s the voice of God. And likewise with FCUK, we had an ad, we said, “Wash your mind out,” because it only says fuck in your mind.

**But that’s interesting, because the regulator, for me, is a stage three problem. Stage one is the creative process, stage two is, how do you get the client behind it?**

Oh, yes.

**Do they embrace it straight away? Have you ever had a really good idea that you know will be successful and then the client has basically said, “No. Too rich for our blood”?**

Not many. No, I've been very, very lucky in that respect, not many. Stephen Marks embraced it straight away, because one thing lead to another. I'd never heard of Stephen Marks, and he was driving, or being driven, along Embankment one night, and he saw a projection that we'd done of Eva Herzigová's Wonderbra ad on Battersea Power Station.

**'Hello Boys'.**

It was the next campaign, it was later on in the campaign, it was after 'Hello Boys'. It was over a year later.

**What was the next campaign? What was the key phrase?**

Oh, they rolled. We did many ads. I forget the actual ad that was on Battersea. We were projecting it from one side of the river to the other because the council wouldn't let us project on Battersea side, so we projected it from Westminster side, because we could get council permission to project.

**You just got a more powerful projector.**

Yes, which we fired it across the Thames.

**Wow.**

Because we'd get Westminster Council permission to do it.

**Yep. And they can't ban photons from another council borough area, can they?**

It was great. And so he saw this and he contacted me and he said, "I want you to do for French Connection what you're doing for Wonderbra." And that was an interesting question, because I didn't really know what he meant by that, because it can mean a lot of things. Do you want notoriety? Do you want fame? Do you want spend? Do you want awareness? There's a lot of answers to that. So I met him and he said, "I want to be the most talked about fashion retailer on the high street." That's a fantastic brief, and the most difficult brief in the world. But that's how one thing leads to another. And then as a result of FCUK, a lot of brands came to us.

**So the brief was deceptively simple because it was just one line. But actually, as you said, there's tons of work that they can follow from that and make us the most talked about brand. How do you go about monetising it? Because you've not only got the creative process, how do you build a business doing**

**this? How did all that happen? And you've got to have staff, you've got to have administrators.**

Oh! An agency, you mean?

**Yes.**

That was before BMB, that was TBWA days, so I didn't have the concern of that at the time. I let the grown-ups get on with that. When I left TBWA, it was walking off a cliff. And I think the lucky thing about advertising as a profession is you just need to people and everything else comes. So if you've got great people, you're not building a factory, and increasingly the advancement of technology, you can do it with three people in a room and one and a half laptops, you really can do it because the overheads aren't much.

**But the controversy that FCUK generated is obviously the very thing that engenders the attention and brings it to prominences. I mean, in terms of their return on investment for every pound they're giving you, it must have been an incredible return because the bang for their buck must have been amazing.**

It was. Their share price went to £12 at one point and it was something like 50p when we started.

**So that literally, him on Embankment there driving past, that was serendipity, because that was the best decision he ever took in his entire career to hire you because he transformed the fortunes of the whole business, which is ultimately what you want to deliver, don't you?**

You do. You do, and there used to be a strange phrase in advertising where people, when you had a disagreement internally with people at work, where you'd have someone saying, "Oh, what you must remember..." "Oh no, they didn't say it in a Yorkshire because they were a care management, so they were much posher than that, there would say, "What you must remember, Trevor, is that the client at the end of the day pays your wages." And I would say, "Does he fuck!" The client does not pay my wages. I pay the client's wages because if what I'm doing is producing successful advertising marketing, which helps them to open in those days was more shops, today will be manufacture more stuff, then I'm paying their wages, I'm enabling them if their brand is successful. Again, it's back to that advertising disliking itself that the client is paying one's wages. I don't like that. I think it's more mutual than that.

**One of the problems I have in my own business is we work for a lot of family offices, and these rich people, they're alpha males, they've been successful, they've never been challenged. And often their media person in-house can't really speak truth to power because their mortgage and their wages depend on it. And one of the reasons I started my business is to spread the risk. I thought, "Well, I'm not going to seek conflict with clients, but if I had five of them and I have to be honest with all of them," which I consider to be the most ethical**

**thing to do, “if one of them does fire me for being honest, at least I’m not going to go back to the bankruptcy court.”**

You are so right. You’re so right. When we set up BMB, the change in client attitude to us was palpable, because all clients are salaried people. It was obvious that I had no axe to grind, so when I was presenting a campaign on behalf of a company which I set up with the fellas, then it has to succeed or we fail. There’s no ulterior motive. Whereas when I’m an employee of TBWA and the client can say, “Well, you’re just doing this to try and win awards, or whatever ulterior motive you might have.” When it’s your own company, I stand and fail by our output, so if our output does not improve your sales or your awareness or whatever the brief might be, if we fail to do that, then we fail. And clients really, really understood that. They really got it. I found clients were much warmer too to our thinking when they knew that you’d got it on the line, it’s your company.

**Well, their success is literally your success.**

Yes, exactly. And it was a genuine partnership in that respect. But I never believed I had ulterior motives, anyway. As I said, I was always very proud to work in advertising. I’m a salesperson, I like to sell stuff. You don’t get this in America, but in Britain there’s a kind of shame attached to selling, like it’s vulgar. It’s vulgar to sell things, which I’ve always found really peculiar, really peculiar. I’m a salesperson. I will sell stuff to the two to the best of my ability.

**Me too.**

And you there’s that derogative phrase, which is, “Well, you can’t just sell it like it’s a tin of beans.” Well you can. You can. It takes you onto politics or, “Well, you’re just selling a politician like they’re a tin of beans.” Yes, and you can.

**Of course you can.**

And there’s no harm in that. There’s no harm. There’s no shame in selling.

**What was the lifestyle like? The industry in the ‘90s was booming and centred around the Groucho Club and wild lifestyles. Or am I just reminiscing?**

I was the only person in advertising who didn’t take drugs.

**Don’t take drugs, kids. This podcast is anti-drugs.**

And I’m very proud of that. I drank too much and I laughed too much, so I’ve stopped.

**You laughed too much?**

I did, I’ve stopped laughing. I’ve carried on drinking, but I’ve stopped laughing. There’s nothing to laugh about. No. Like anything, looking back on it, things didn’t appear the way... what’s the rear view mirror phrase? At the time we weren’t going around saying, “Hey, this is Cool Britannia, this is the swinging ‘90s and we’re all

having fun.” We just thought this is forever, this is how it is really. In the way that we will look back on these current days and say, “Good heavens! You lived through the Brexit thing and the Trump thing, did you?” Yes. I’m not a believer in the rosé-tinted specs of it all, no.

**Do you think ‘Hello Boys’ would be banned today by the advertising standards authority? There’s all these new rules targeting the objectification of men and women, sexism in campaigns and so on.**

Oh, god.

**Because you intrigued me with the talk of the regulator, I never even thought back then that the ASA might have got in the way of this.**

I think that it would have burned itself out really quickly in a big or a smaller ball of flame. That’s what would have happened. And probably with FCUK as well. Because with social media, things get examined, scrutinize, destroyed, exploded, recreated, rebuilt, knocked down again and disappear in a day. So, I think that that would have happened to it. I think that what took maybe five years of debate and arguments and articles in the Daily Mail, with campaigns, would have happened in a much more condensed way. So you wouldn’t have got longevity out of either of those campaigns. They would have been examined, they would have been decimated, they would have been defended, then decimated again, and it all would have happened really quickly. It would have been fascinating, but it would have been over a much, much shorter period of time, because of social media and because of social awareness that we have. It still doesn’t stop things being defended and examined, but it happens at a really rapid pace now.

**There could be a doctoral thesis about this actually that we could do about, how the Daily Mail getting all upset about certain things actually achieves the opposite of what they want, which is to give it a cool factor if the Daily Mail hates it. I mean the reason why I bought Relax by Frankie Goes To Hollywood is because the BBC had banned it. So I thought, “Oh well, it must be subversive and good then.”**

Oh, of course.

**I bought Funky Moped by Jasper Carrott; they banned that for some reason.**

What’s her name? Jan? Jan Moore? Jan Moir? In the Daily Mail, she wrote a full page about FCUK saying how it’s going to lead to the downfall of Western civilization.

**And did it? Just checking.**

No, it did, it obviously did. That’s the trouble! It bloody did. So, we made it into a T-shirt and we sold it, printed the whole page as a T-shirt for FCUK and we sold it for £25 a pop.

**And it sold?**

And it sold, yes.

**That must be the best part of the job where you just come up with an absolutely random bold idea like that and it works.**

Yes. So, I think that attitude is still prevalent today where people will print their online abuse and they'll do that. There's a similar thing, isn't it, saying, "Go, punch yourself out." Do that. I think that's still relevant.

**And most soberly you worked with Peter Mandelson on masterminding the New Labour campaigns, back in the old days when we were actually winning elections.**

Yes. Well before we were winning in election actually because there was Peter and there was Philip Gould, god bless him.

**Yes, much missed.**

And Neil Kinnock and Deborah Madson, who's still around – hello, Deborah – and Peter. And we used to gather in pubs, like we were the French Resistance or something, and plot and scheme that one day, once again, there would be a Labour government.

**There was. Ten glorious years, then a couple with Gordon at the end.**

But then John Smith came along and we thought, "This is it. We've done it. We're going to get him. We're going to get in. This is it."

**John would have been a great prime minister in fairness.**

Even more so today. And just on the verge of John getting there we lost him. And I genuinely thought, "Forget it now because it's all gone. It's all gone." And then with Tony, it happened. It was extraordinary.

**I was just a bit too young. I was inspired. I joined the Labour Party when Tony became leader, and I'm still Blairite to this day. I used to say to Tony, joking with occasionally, that he wasn't Blairite enough for me.**

Yes. Well, I had a moment in Number 10, I had a few moments in Number 10, and I stood in what used to be Thatcher's cabinet room. And she had a toilet fitted. She'd had a toilet built in the corner of the cabinet office. I went and had a wee in there, which was a moment. And presented a poster of William Hague with Margaret Thatcher's hair for the election with a few different lines.

**I remember it.**

And one was, "Be afraid, be very afraid," which is a parody of a movie poster.

**So this was obviously 2001?**

Yes.

**So we were up for re-election.**

Yes.

**I remember that well. I remember that image. It was iconic.**

And I held that board. And there was me, and behind me there was no one. And in front of me there was Tony and Alistair and Peter, and a bunch of other people all behind Tony. And they were looking at me and they all had their fingers crossed. It was a really funny scene, I wish I had a photograph of that scene, they're all staring behind Tony and I'm showing him this and I'm saying to him, "This is going to be..."

**And was this the Roman emperor moment where you either get the thumbs up or the thumbs down?**

No, you're right. It was literally that. And I said, "This is going to be the most iconic image of the general election." And he sort of smiled at me, and he went quiet, and then he said, "Me and you are going to get to know each other very well, aren't we in this election?" And everyone behind did a silent cheer.

**I mean, now of course you wouldn't choose that because that would probably get Hague elected, given the current climate in politics. Everyone's gone mad, people say, "Oh, Thatcher, we had strong leadership."**

I think that almost nothing that I did in the advertising sense in politics would work now.

**Well that's a fascinating point, which I'll take in a second, but how would you actually come up with the idea then? So were you planting your geraniums when you thought, "I'll stick Thatcher's hair on Hague's head"? How did you actually come up with that?**

No, that was a very logical piece of work because he was Thatcher's child. He wrote that out himself because there was that infamous speech of him aged five, aged three, at the Tory conference, making a speech in a funny bloke's voice, even though I'm only three. And Thatcher was behind him, blurred in the background, saying, "That's what we'll do, we'll kill workers and we'll prevent wage rises for the next 37 years."

**I'm all for those policies, by the way, genuinely, so we might disagree on that.**

So there was all of that. And so he was defined as Thatcher's child. And again, I believe there was an honesty about it that said... there's a phrase that's been used, "Vote this, get that." You hear that a lot these days. And so for them, it was "vote

Hague, get Thatcher". That's all it was. It was a visual interpretation of, okay, vote Hague, get Thatcher. It made total sense.

**To those people that don't like Tony, of which obviously I'm not one, but there are many, there was the criticism in the Blair years that New Labour was more marketing and advertising genius over substance. And of course, you were the chief architect of that. So in a sense it's all your fault from their point of view. Do you accept that?**

No, I don't accept that because the national minimum wage was not a marketing ploy, neither was the improvement in education, education, education. No, no, absolute crap.

**Well, obviously I'm on your side there.**

Absolute crap.

**I had to ask that as a token question. There was the criticism, wasn't there, that Blair was so telegenic, every speech was word perfect. And there seems to be a backlash against that now, that we've elected politicians like Donald Trump and Boris, whether it's real or otherwise...**

I don't think that's connected though. I don't think that you can draw that line. I don't think you'd go from, "Oh, Clinton and Blair were telegenically correct and perfect." And then you continue the line, and you get a pair of Herberts, and that's saying it politely. There is no straight line from Blair and Clinton, in terms of bloody performance and integrity and nous and these pair of pillocks who have no connection. There is no line you can draw. I think the line is broken.

**Does it worry you though?**

I think the line starts again. There's a line between Trump and Farage and Johnson, yes. But that line doesn't go back to Blair, I don't see.

**But does it worry you that Trump is supported by 48% of American people? There are women that watched the 'grab them by the pussy' segment eight days before the election and still voted for him. Corbyn, who I can't stand, has – admittedly, in fairness to him – has hundreds of thousands of admirers and supporters in the Labour Party. Boris polls ever so highly more than Corbyn, and people love him. Do you despair for humanity is my question.**

Yes, I totally despair for humanity. One thing that struck me in recent times is this word fan and I really don't like it. I don't believe that politicians should have fans. It's too serious a job to have fan worship. And that's at the heart of it. And when Johnson was campaigning for the leadership, grown adult journalists in print and TV media interviewed people and addressed them as a 'Boris fan'. So first it's the Christian name and fan, and I object to both. The same with Trump, people would say, "So, I hear you're a bit of a Trump fan." I've got a problem with that. I think that that's the heart of the issue, that there are certain politicians who have fan bases and I think



that is dangerous. I'm not a fan of Tony. I'm not a fan of Boris Johnson. I'm not fan of anybody. But I'm not a fan of a politician. I think that's ludicrous, facile... don't like.

**I'm a raving secularist and militant atheist. I'm an evangelical fundamentalist atheist, in fact.**

Excellent wordage!

**Well, Richard Dawkins isn't atheist enough for me. But of course Tony was very big on faith school, so even though I hugely admired him as a prime minister, I thought it was perfectly respectable to also challenge some of his policies. Like you say, just because I admire him and most of the decisions he took were right doesn't mean he's right on everything, otherwise we're just into some kind of cult.**

Yes. The other problem leads to the lack of compromise, willing to compromise, in that, as a card-carrying member of the Labour Party, there's a hell of a lot of stuff that throughout the decades I have disagreed with Labour upon. But you know what? I'm going to go with it. But that's at odds with the way that people lead their lives now because they say, "Well, I can select. So my programming is what I select. I don't want any hard centres in my sweets. I want that selection from that programme and that. I can only watch that film. And my consumption for media must only be this. And I can hand-select the package."

**It's called 'cafeteria consumption' in the industry, that use pick and choose what you want.**

Yes. And I want no one else's views, just mine. And so I want a party of one. So my political party must adhere to every single one of my faiths and beliefs and nuances, or they don't get my vote. It's bollocks.

**But people, like you say, are self-centred. I mean, 20 years ago when I was on the Guardian website, they introduced the ability to take certain subject areas off the site. So I don't like sport, I consider the whole thing to be a waste of time, so I click the minus sign on there. There's no more sport ever on my Guardian homepage for 20 years. Take that to its ultimate extent...**

I think that's a terrible thing.

**Well, because take that to the Facebook feeds that people have in the Trump/Hillary Clinton election where you've basically got a Democrat newsfeed and a Trump newsfeed, where people are only being fed the things that reinforce their world view, not challenge it.**

You're right. Because it's being driven by an algorithm. And I'll give you an example. I'm a collector of memorabilia, of popular culture memorabilia. At the same time, I've never driven a car in my life and I never will. And I saw a news feature of an upcoming auction, where they were selling the car from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. And I thought, "What a fascinating thing. I wonder how much that's going for. I'm

fascinated to find out.” So, I investigate it. Guess what it’s going for, a million pounds. Within a few days. I’m then getting badgered by emails from vintage car companies. “Here’s another vintage car you might want to buy.” I don’t want to buy vintage cars. I don’t want to buy any car. It’s not a car, it’s a piece of memorabilia. And that is an algorithm misunderstanding my interest and desire. And also it means that, scanning through the news, I see things that I normally wouldn’t be interested in, but now I am, because of that. Serendipity. And we’re removing serendipity. So, it’s that combination of you’ve got to have serendipity in your life – back to having ideas, you’ve got to have that. You’ve got to be a sponge. You’ve got to feed yourself with the random stuff that you like and don’t like. It’s very important. It’s very important that I consume the media that I don’t like. I’m a bit annoyed I can’t watch Fox News anymore in Britain because it’s important that I know what they’re up to. It’s important that I know how Fox News are going to manage this tricky little issue of impeachment. How are Fox News going to take a stand on that and a stance with their boy being impeached? I don’t know that now. I’m going to America next week, I might get a glimpse of it. But I’m not allowed to see Fox News in Britain because they’re ‘very naughty boys’.

**Just get a VPN. I mean, obviously I’m not imploring our listeners to do that, but it’s only £99.**

But you see, I’m having to do that. I’m an adult, I’m able to consume that stuff and not be poisoned by Fox News, but be fascinated by their stance. So, it’s okay that they can make a six-part TV series, *The Loudest Voice*, about Fox News. It’s brilliant, it’s fascinating. But I can’t actually watch the real thing. Well, why am I allowed to watch a movie about it then? I find that obtuse. And back to the political party thing, everyone wants a party that is strictly of their choosing. It must tick every single box on their agenda or they’re not voting for them. And then that way madness lies. That way coalition and hung parliaments lie.

**And that seems to be the position that we’re in now these days, frankly. I mean, obviously Boris has got a majority of -47 at the moment. Do you think the ad industry has become very bland of late, and risk-free, with everyone copying John Lewis?**

I did. I did. I have thought that for a few years now. But I think that Adland is finally leaving that period. Adland is full of trends and I think that the John Lewis acoustic guitar reworking of an old Aerosmith classic over some drippy passage through time generationally idea is the longest-surviving trend in the history of advertising. It’s been going on for 15 years now. I think it’s finally over. It will not be missed. John Lewis’ profits are currently down 97% or something. John Lewis, like every store, is struggling. And Adland hasn’t saved it. So I don’t think that trend will continue much longer, so I’m happy to announce that I believe that that’s moved on, that Adland has moved on, and that that notion has been laid to rest. I think it has.

**I mean, when you left TBWA in London to launch BMB, the concepts of the traditional advertising agency was still there; you did it differently, but do you think all of that’s been blown apart now by the digital revolution?**

Yes. I think that it's changed so much. It's become so fragmented. If Adland stares at its navel any harder, it's going to burn a hole in its belly. It's really navel gazing hugely at the minute and it does need to kind of say, "Right, we've done that now. We've gazed at our navel, we've established what's there and now we're going to move on in this new way."

**Otherwise it will disappear up its own arse.**

It's a very, very extraordinary physical position it's going to find itself in. But it's got to stop now. It's got to move on now and it's stalling a bit I think is what I would say. It's stalling. It's doing too much talking and not enough acting.

**Are you a thought leader in this space now? Is that how you think of yourself?**

No, I'm not. Don't want to be.

**Do people ask you to deliver keynotes at conferences, or do they shun you?**

They used to, when I said yes. No, I found out that they were kind of charging people £200-£300 to go to this thing that I was talking at, and others were talking at, and that we weren't getting paid – and I didn't like that. I don't think people should pay to hear me talk. And, they even had, there was one night where they made students pay £10 or something, and I just found it appalling and I gave them all their £10 back, it was just ridiculous. There's too much theorising going on and also they would say, "You're doing this talk to further your career," and bullshit. I don't want to further my career, I'm too busy. I've got work to do. I don't want to further my career.

**You want to lessen your career.**

They would generally frame these things as, "If you do our conference, it'll further your career." How will it do that, then?

**Do you still get the same buzz today from producing feature films that you previously from advertising?**

Oh god, more.

**Tell us about your feature film production career then. How did it come about what you're doing?**

It all came about because I hired a fellow called Duncan Jones 10 years ago, 11 years ago now. I'd kind of known Duncan all my life or his life certainly, but he was Zowie Bowie. So, I knew him as Zowie Bowie. And to meet him as Duncan was amazing. And, then to work with him – he directed some commercials for me, for McCain and others at TBWA – and, then when I set up BNB, we, me and him were drinking in a nearby establishment here.

**A hostelry?**

A hostelry. And I said, "What are you doing with your life?" And, he said, "Don't know." And, I said, "Why don't you bloody come and be an ad man?" He said, "I've never really had a job, never had an office job. What do you mean?" I said, "Well, come and work at BNB." So, I hired him. One of the great things of having your own company is that you can hire whoever you want. You just go and get drunk with someone and think, "You're great, do you want to work at my place?" And, then they say yes, and then you hire them.

### **I've done that many times.**

It's kind of the best.

### **I've got it wrong many times as I've been right.**

But, you can get it wrong by going to head hunters and examining people for months on end. So I hired Duncan, and that changed everything because he would have a thousand ideas a day. He didn't understand advertising, he understood ideas. He just kept having ideas. And then one day, he started writing screenplays. I said to him, "We're going to lose you to Hollywood, aren't we?" He said, "No, no, no, you won't." And, cut a long story short, the script for Moon came along and he said, "We want to make this, but we need help." And, I helped him and I helped to try and steer him where it was going, and I gave him a pile of money when no one else believed in him, and I took the script around town, and I took it to lots of my clients, and no one would invest in it. No one, no one I showed that script to – shame on you if you're listening now, all you people I showed that script to who didn't invest in it, shame on you – they didn't invest.

### **So, did you have to put even more money?**

Yes, but there were people who did, who we found and we made Moon for a low budget. And, we went to the BAFTAs, and he was nominated for two, and Duncan won Best New Director. And that night changed my life. And from that night, people were so nice, and such lovely people, and I thought, "Yes, I'm going to make movies. I want to do this. Oh, I want to do this now I want to be with these people." And, they believed in their projects. And, I understood why people cry to award ceremonies because you put so much into making a film, for someone to appreciate what you've done is genuinely moving. And, I felt that for the first time, you know?

### **What films have you done since?**

Well, we did Moon. And, then after that I did a film called Attacking the Devil with Jackie and David Morris, which is a documentary about the thalidomide scandal, and the Harry Evans story, really how Harry Evans, who's editor of the Sunday Times...

### **Harry's is a very good friend of mine. He did this podcast ages ago.**

Now, if you want to use the word legend, just reserve it for Harry because for Harry Evans, to fight that fight on behalf of thalidomide survivors without the aid of the internet, just the aid of genius, investigative journalism and tireless energy, it's

brehtaking. So, the film was a tribute to his work and it was an honour of the survivors who are still around 55 years on.

**They don't make them like that any more.**

That was extraordinary.

**I think it's on Netflix, that.**

It is on Netflix, yes, please watch it. I'm very proud of that film. And, then Jackie and David, we got together and said, "What happens next?" And, they said, "Well, nothing you'd be interested in." And, I said, "What is it?" "Well, we're thinking about a film about Rudolf Nureyev." And, I just went "Right! I'm having it, I'm in, I'm going to produce it, I'm going to fund it. It's perfect, let's do it." And, they were really shocked that I even knew who Nureyev was. And so we spent three and a half years making Nureyev, a film of which I am intensely proud. That was out last year. And in parallel, I was working on the kind of definitive feature documentary on the Spitfire, where we spoke to the remaining Spitfire pilots, including the amazing Mary Ellis, who was 101 at our premiere, 101 years old. And she flew a thousand aeroplanes. She would pick up the planes at the factory and fly them to the air fields during the war. She flew a thousand planes, including 600 Spitfires. Extraordinary women built the plane. Extraordinary women flew the plane, extraordinary men flew into battle. So, it was an amazing story and attribute to all those guys and the plane itself. As a plane, it's a plane with a soul. After that, I've done a wartime romp with Mr Eddie Izzard, it's his first screenplay. Eddie and Dame Judi Dench, it's called Six Minutes to Midnight and it's kind of an old-fashioned 1939 dark comedy really. It's lovely.

**What type of producer are you? How do you go about doing it? How involved creatively are you?**

I'm a shambles!

**So am I.**

I'm a shambles.

**But, do you give notes on the script? Are you there on set?**

All of the above.

**So, you're much more than say, a vanity executive producer credit where you give the money.**

Yes, yes.

**You're involved?**

Yes, because of advertising. Because, I think that the role that I play in the making of a movie I don't think exists in movie land, which is the creative director. So, the creative director, I believe, is the heartbeat of an advertising agency – and yet that role doesn't really exist in the making of a movie. It lies between director and producer. The creative director is between those two. So, I'm concerned about, to a degree about the funding and I'll go out there and I'll be the performing monkey and I'll raise funds for a film. But, I'll also be concerned about the narrative of the scripts. I'll also be concerned about, I'll do all the marketing free, obviously, I can do the marketing with my hands tied behind my back for a movie. That's easy. But also, because I have insights about the film, if I'm doing an ad campaign for a film then I've made the product as well. So, it's a fascinating position to be in that you're manufacturing the product, and then you're making the ad for the product you manufactured. So, I can get as involved or as uninvolved as I choose to be on each of the projects. And, some of them I might just say, "Well, I'm going to co-fund it." Others I might say, "Well, I'll just do the marketing" and others I'll say, "I'm all over it." And, with Nureyev and Spitfire, I'm all over it. And, next up we're doing the life story of Sonny Liston. The Murder of Sonny Liston, which we're going to be shooting in Vegas next year. That's going to be extraordinary that's not a documentary. That's a drama. And then there's the biggest film ever, but I can't tell you about yet, but I promise I'll come back. I'll tell you when this mic is switched off, because it's the biggest thing I'll ever be involved in. And, I promise I would come back if you'd have me, to talk just about that film because it's going to be so big, this film. It's going to be very special.

**I'll look forward to it.**

So, it's all-consuming but it doesn't have the intensity that advertising has. And, advertising happens at warp factor speed and a movie happens at glacial speed. And, if you just take an ounce of the urgency that you have in advertising and inject it into movie land, you don't half get things done.

**I'll bet. And, you mentioned warp speed there, I mean, your next challenge is going into space, is it not?**

Yes.

**With Virgin Galactic. You're going to be Richard Branson's first passenger?**

Yes.

**Is it that you feel you've already conquered planet Earth? Therefore that stage two is outer space. I mean, come on.**

Ha ha! Going to space is the only thing I've ever wanted to do in my life, and that's the truth.

**From a physics point of view, of course you're in space now, but I know what you mean. You want to leave planet Earth.**

Well, that's very well put. Yes. Okay, I want to leave the planet. Yes.

**Is there any economy-class ticket that I can also join you in?**

Well, there's six seats, so I'm sure that...

**I don't want business, economy will be fine.**

I'm sure the two at the back are the easy space seats at the back. Yes. I'm going to New York next week Tuesday to be fitted for my space suit. I don't say that very often, but...

**You don't. And, the problem that I would have is occasionally when I'm overworked, and I'm tired and I descend into comfort eating, is that I'd be worried that the measurements for that... the map wouldn't fit the territory eight months from now.**

It might be an expandable.

**I would hope that it would be a bit baggier, but the reality is it'd be a bit tighter.**

It might be, I don't know, it might be an expandable. It's genuinely the only thing I wanted to do. I've got this talk that I've done... when I first did this talk to students, it didn't have the effect I wanted you to have, but it was called 'Advertising Is a Vehicle Which Will Fly Me to Space'. And, in which I confess that really I don't give a toss about advertising. I only did it to raise enough funds to get myself to space. Have you seen the Bowie film, The Man Who Fell To Earth? The Nick Roeg film? It's that story where this alien comes to earth and he only has to get back. So, he invents all of these patents that he sells for billions to raise funds to get the spaceship take him back. And I'm on a microscopic scale of that. I only pretended I liked advertising, convinced people that I liked advertising, they would give me lots of money and I could buy a ticket and go to space. That was the plan. And, so far so good. And when I did this talk that the students were just gutted. I expected them to kind of smile and go, "Oh, that's a clever connection you're making there, Trev." And, they didn't. They sort of looked at me as if I'd told them I'd just stabbed Santa or that he didn't exist. That wasn't the reaction I was looking for. They didn't like me. "You're a charlatan, you charlatan!"

**I think you are a charlatan but I like you because of that. I think you're a legend. Tell us about the foundation.**

The Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation is the most important thing I've ever done in my life. And it's a foundation I set up nearly 10 years ago now in honour and memory of my parents. I lost my dad before I came to London. My dad never saw me make it in London. He gave me my coach fare to come to London to get my interview, and we lost him a few months later before I'd actually got my job in London.

**He sounds like a good dad though, to be fair.**

Well, exactly. So, then I was on a mission, because he'd bought that ticket that powered me through advertising. So, that when I went there and when I was a stranger in a strange land, when I was this oik among the posh, I had the voice of Jack Beattie in my ears, because he was an Irishman who came to Birmingham and never went back, really. And, I had him on my shoulder when I fought my battles to try and be something. He was there. My mum did see me make it in advertising. We did fly my mum on Concorde to New York and stuff. So, she lived like the Queen, and that's great, but when you lose your mum, then you're an orphan. And it doesn't matter what age you are when you realise you are a kind of orphan. It changes you. And, so I knew nothing about charities and foundations. I didn't know the difference between a charity and a foundation. And it was Alex Taliadoros who taught me the difference. And, together we set up the foundation. That a foundation is something which gives to charities. And, so we set it up in the spirit and the philosophy of my parents, and we help out people who need it in Birmingham and in London. We particularly help the Normandy veterans. We take Normandy veterans back every year, and it was probably the last time this year, the 75th. But, we've helped out an awful lot of people.

**What type of people, and what type of help do you give them?**

Well, it was through Alex that I discovered a thing called a food bank, six or seven years ago. I'd never knew such a thing existed.

**It's to our society's great shame that they do.**

I never knew that they existed.

**To society's credit insofar as it's helping, but it's a shame that they're needed.**

Exactly. It is a peculiar, peculiar thing.

**It's the best and the worst of society.**

That's right. And, so we helped out food banks, which is such a weird combination, when you want to wipe out food banks and you help out food banks. We helped the RNLI, because again, there was something that my parents believed in strongly. We helped at an outfit called Air Ability, who give people with disabilities the chance to fly an airplane. So, you can convert a Cessna from foot pedals to having hand pedals. So, you can fly solo in your wheelchair in a Cessna. For £5,000, you can convert a Cessna. So, we did lots of those and we have events to raise funds for various charitable causes. And, recently we set up as a subsidiary of the foundation, a thing called the Bank of Mum and Dad. And, the Bank of Mum and Dad is singularly the most important thing I've ever done in my life, which is loans. But, they are interest free, tax free, charges free, they are free loans.

**Helping out the most vulnerable.**

Helping out the most vulnerable people in society.



**And, because they're loans, it's giving them dignity. It's not a handout.**

Absolutely.

**When they're trusted to pay it back, you can then recycle the money to lend to other people.**

Absolutely correct. And, the first five we gave out have already been repaid, and we only set it up last year. So, they had two years to pay it back, they've paid them back straight away. Because, as you excellently explained, I believe in people's dignity. And, if someone needs money for a van because they're driving round and they're cutting old people's hair, they need a van and they need it now, but they can pay you back later.

**A hand up, not a hand out.**

Correct. And, I say to them, "Well, here's the thousand pounds for your van, but the sooner you get me that £1,000 back, the sooner that you personally, Jane, can give that £1,000 to the next person who is in your position now. You know how you feel now; the sooner you get that back, you not me, will be helping that person." And, that money came back within six months. And, as I say, the first five have been returned. Really surprised me how fast people have come back. If you trust people, and you treat them with dignity, they will repay you. If they choose to run off with the money and never give it me back, I can still sleep nights, but they won't, and they don't. They will give the money back because they know how it feels – and, having gotten them out of their situation, it will then empower them to know that they can sleep nights knowing that they took that money and they helped someone else with it, and it moves on.

**Where are you going to take it?**

It's growing, and I need to publicise it more. I'm going to spend this winter shouting it from the hilltops, because people kind of don't believe it. We had a lot of wrangles with legals on it, because the financial services people – and if I speak out of line, screw you. I don't care.

**Technical breaches are the worst.**

People wanted me, demanded that I take a cut. Demanded that you need the, "Oh, it's against the law. You can't use the word 'bank'. You can't call yourself a bank. You can't do this. You can't do that. You must take interest." "Don't want interest." "You must take at least, why don't you just take half a percent?" "I don't want any interest." They didn't understand that the very notion this is an anti-bank. People use the phrase 'bank of mum and dad' a lot. It was on the news recently because some facetious reporter said that the Bank of Mum and Dad was the seventh biggest bank in Britain. The difference is the Bank of Mum and Dad out there. Those kids don't pay their parents back; ours is a different system. It's called Bank of Mum and Dad because it's Jack and Ada's bank. So, it's Jack and Ada, never had any money in

their lives, and now Jack and Ada will have access to a fund that, through them, I can allocate to people in need. And that is an organic system that will work. When I was a kid, we had no money. My mum would get what was called a Provident check for £5 and pay back £5.20 or something.

**From someone who would come door-to-door.**

It was a called a Providence check and you lived by it. If you got one of those payday loans now for £100, you potentially lose your house – and that's fucked up. We can't live like this. But if you inject some kind of humanity and dignity into the situation, it does a little bit to calming it all down. We are already all outraged by the Wongas of this world, and they've been shamed. It's taken a long time, but they've been shamed.

**Well, they've been put out of business.**

Formally and put out of business, but we still let it happen for a good 10 years. If we can do our little bit to write the wrong, good. And, if more people want to do what I'm doing, also good. And, if more people want to put some money in the tin of Bank of Mum and Dad, feel free to do so because I'm putting loads in, but we'll need more. But, I think we're doing the right thing.

**Trevor, thank you for doing the podcast. I very, very much appreciate it.**

Cheers. Thank you.