

Part One

A: Start at the beginning. What's your first memory?

K: In relation to what?

A: Ever.

K: Ever?

A: In life.

K: Um. One of my one of my very, one of my memories that I remember and have never forgotten is a dream that I had when I was about four and a half years of age. And this is a memory that for whatever reason has stayed with me up until, well remained with me, so when you talk about memory I'll always remember this particular dream, which was about myself being in a lorry with no windows either side and I was being carted off, taken to a school for people with disabilities. Now, at that time, I had never known anyone with a disability or mixed with them. In my dream, in my head, I was imagining being whisked away in a, in a, in a, in a truck full of freaks. And that was my sentiment at that age. And this was all because I was going to be going to a boarding school because my father was in the forces and I had to be, there had to be somewhere for me to go. And so the local authority said don't worry, we know where your daughter can go. And so I started off as a weekly boarder, so I was there during the week, went home at weekends. So yes, I was absolutely petrified of being deposited in this unknown place at such a young age.

And I also remember being in the playground of the school on the first day at primary school and a girl, disabled girl, I was crying profusely and I was in a manual wheelchair because in those days you had to wait forever to get an electric wheelchair, and I could never physically manage, I was never able to move in a manual wheelchair. And so I was in the chair and just sat there because I'd been deposited in the playground of the school and a girl came over to me, she was a bit older than me and said to me you've got to pull yourself

together otherwise you'll sink and won't survive this. Anyway it turns out that, anyway, I formed a very quick, good, solid relationship with her and she was pretty much the top dog of the school. But she was (known as?) really naughty. So those are very vivid memories that I have.

A Right. So you went to boarding school very early?

K: Yes

A: How was it?

K: *(Gives instructions to P.A.)*

K: Another memory that I remember - how many memories do you want?

A: As much as you wanna tell me. I can always not use them

K: There was another memory, a very vivid memory that I had, which is when I was a child, again very young, and I think it was very hard for my father to accept that I was disabled even though their first child had been born disabled with the same disability as myself and died at the age of seventeen and a half months. And I remember vividly my father - just to step back, because my physique then was very normal, I looked completely able-bodied, even though I was unable to crawl or walk or weight bear, but I, or roll over, still needed everything done, though I could do more then than I can do now. My father just couldn't accept that fact that I was unable to walk, so I remember him sitting on the sofa and then holding me standing up with my back to him, and his belief was that by letting go of me I would just naturally be able to just hold myself. And I fell flat on the floor. It's not something that I'm traumatised by, I understand, I get it, but that was just something that I very vividly remember.

And I, I sort of also understand that because my father, I think that he, he was just, I think that the particularity of my body didn't match the level of what I couldn't do. So it made no sense to him. So he had to go through this quite rudimentary exercise in order to just be certain. And I don't remem.. I don't

recall at that point whether I'd had a muscle biopsy, which was the way in which they were able to determine whether I had the same disability as their previous child. And also there was my brother (Louis?) he was able-bodied. So that I was the third and last child. And we (...) There are lots of things that I remember now that you've asked me the questions. I remember that the school, it was a Shaftesbury Society special school. Something I remember is that my mother was quite distraught because I went to the school being able to read quite fluently and when I came back from the school in the holidays, it's like my ability to read had deteriorated. (...)

I remember the school just being extremely confining, they were just ridiculous, it was very regimental there were lots of rules and I remember the summer of 1977, I think it was a day when it was the hottest summer of the year and I was nearly eleven, so I was nearly coming to the end of this school and I remember that they put, we still had this regime in which we all had to be in bed, the older people which I came under that category, we all had to be in bed by seven pm in the evening. I just remember that vividly, with me once I'm in bed even then I can't roll over or sit up, so I was literally bedded for the night and it was excruciating, because there was no way that I could sleep when it was so hot, it was light outside and yet they were still putting us to bed by seven pm and that was it. And there was nothing I could do, nothing other than communicate with the other people (...) But they weren't the most sharpest on the block. I mean, they were okay but they weren't really you know, they were just, they weren't great conversationalists. It's not an age when you're talking much anyway, just immensely frustrated when you're in this crazy situation which feels utterly confining. So frustration was something that I really was experiencing at the time. Like complete frustration. And I think that that part of me um (..) influenced me. And maybe that's why now, I don't even start to, begin to think about going to bed till after one am.. (..) I'm a late person. I will not go to bed until I'm ready to crash because once again I cannot do anything. That has a huge influence. We weren't allowed to watch television, we were only allowed to watch Top of the Pops, once a week. We did try to escape, we tried to actually escape and just collapsed because.. Again, we were never taken out. One of my memories was that we went, they took us to the Victoria School, still exists, in Dorset, Poole, Dorset. And I remember that they, we went into the Sunshine

Variety Bus. And they took us to the, to the pond, so they had the ducks and the swans, and they were too lazy to let us out.

A: They were too..

K Lazy to let us out. We literally just sat..

A: In the bus?

K: In the bus. Looked at the ducks and the swans till they took us back. That's all. No wonder I turned out the way... My God! I mean, you know, it's terrible isn't it? You can tell what I think about this stuff. It was..awful. But I was, what kept me going was I had very good parents. But they were in Germany and I was in England, and I'd only see them in the holidays (..) These schools are absolutely disgusting. Sort of psychological oppression, they were restrictive. And I also remember that I was desperate to have an electric wheelchair. I've never ever been able to move an inch in a manual wheelchair, I wasn't one of those people that was put in a manual wheelchair, if I tried a bit hard I would somehow be able to move, I wasn't able to move, they weren't, they had a rule that the more able-bodied kids weren't allowed to push the kids that were in the wheelchairs. I never experienced freedom of movement ..

K: So the more able-bodied kids *weren't* allowed.. to push me. It was (..) So I wasn't actually able to move around until I was eight. They then decided that because, I think, I don't get the.. I could (..) it, but I don't really want to, I don't care about it because it's stupidity beyond.. I'm sure this kind of material would be great for psychologists, but I just don't even want, I don't want to.. It was so heinous and so disgusting, I start to think about it, it makes me so angry. By the age of eight, at the age of eight being decided that I was old enough to be put in an electric wheelchair, which was a monodrive, it had a (...) that came up the middle and I was able to experience movement for the first time in my life. I had to basically reverse and go forwards between beds to prove that I was capable of steering the chair.

And I think that also had an impact on me, because I was someone who, no

matter what happens I have to always be able to drive my own electric wheelchair. And that has been increasingly more difficult but the idea of being pushed around like (an ill) person is just not going to happen. I always keep aware of what's happening to me (where to move). I don't want people moving me. But sometimes I have to, if it's cold. I'm affected by the cold, I can't move the chair if it's cold and we're outside. (..)

But going back to the memory thing, that was a very vivid memory. And then I remember, this was at, the primary school was very, very ridiculous, very hideous, it was run by the Shaftesbury Society who are a Christian organisation, so all the patrons go by the Christian ethos. The staff inside the school that worked there, it was not relevant, they were, they weren't Christians, they were just people who may or may not happen to be Christians. So it was the Shaftesbury Society it was their sort of brand, their way of working, I don't know their ethos was to run a Christian charity, schools based on Christianity and to, I'm sure it was for the good, but it, you wouldn't find it, in a primary school there was no, no evidence of, there was abuse but not physical abuse to my knowledge, but it was a social oppression abuse. But the staff, I liked a lot of the staff, because they weren't stupid and I was able to at least (relate) and talk to them, but it was survival, it was like mental survival. You had to be mentally strong to survive at the school. And I remember a report that they wrote about me to my parents and said 'Katherine excels in everything but she does tend to take advantage of the younger children'. And what they meant by that was I, because I was physically not able, I needed things passed to me, put closer to me, I'd already started to orchestrate my own PAs, my little PAs. The younger, not younger, the more physically able children assisted me. And that was a survival strategy. And they would do whatever I asked them to do. So I was really good at directing, *really* good at directing. (It's like I was setting myself up without realising it.)

At teatime they'd give us sandwiches and we'd have to eat everything, even if we didn't want to. So I hated the crusts on the bread, so I would eat the sandwich and then pass the crust under the table to my person that was my assistant, cause he would scoff them. Yeah, the school was limited, I think they thought that, I dunno, I've actually got nothing too positive to say about it, I'm not saying

that every moment was bad, it wasn't but it was just, when I look back on it I just think what a crazy, it was just, absolutely absurd (uneducated?) way of thinking. And I am a product of that school. And is that a good thing or.. I'm not sure, it must have had an impact on who I am now. Maybe that's why my work is, as an artist, very strong, very, some might think it's forceful. But I did, I did survive that primary school.

A: When you say there was social abuse..

A: Not taking us out. We never went out. We were boarders. Taking us to the local pond and not taking us physically out of the.. We visited a shopping centre once, we never went to the shops. I was getting so desperate, I signed up to go to Sunday school that was outside of the institution. You know we never went out, we were literally hidden in the woods, we didn't see a road. So we were surrounded by trees, pine trees, no-one could see us, we had no access to the, to the outside world. We never integrated in any sense.

It was, it was absolutely gross. I dunno, when you're sort of, of, when this is a, when you're restricted in that way, you don't (..), it just becomes what you're used to, you don't necessarily challenge it or believe that it is wrong. But there's, there's a frustration building inside. But you're with people of your own age, so you make alliances, that is part of a coping strategy. So I, I became used to that existence and felt safe. But it was a completely distorted sense of safety. It was very institutionalised. And you become used to it, and you sort of, it becomes a way of life. But it wasn't er, it was, it was very, I mean everything, the more I think about it, it was just really silly, disabled people, children, it was all about physios. (And all the time you..therapy call) And.. everything was quite basic, education: basic, physio: essential. And I think the older I became the more rebellious I was(...) Not worth thinking about. (..) I think this whole restriction (..) But I had very loving parents. (..) Different things. But my mother was very psychologically, very, very good, always understood, I had a very good relationship with her

Can we stop a minute?

A: Yeah, sure.

(...)

A: So, what next?

K: The institutionalised schooling system really wasn't favourable and it isn't actually something that I've dwelled on in terms of becoming a victim, because I, that isn't how I function. For me it was about survival and turning circumstances that are negative into strengths.

(Conversation)

So I think that sort of, that sort of .. oppression, at boarding school definitely has..

you have a choice, you either become a victim and oppressed, actually no that's not true, not everybody does have a choice. I feel that I've managed to maintain a strength, a mental strength, I've always been strong mentally, not always, that's not quite true, but I think that it was a question of (it's not right to) dwell on negativity, it doesn't help me, it just, it's like for me it's the opening of starting to just think, and not feeling that you're on top of things. So the question is to turn the negativity into something, an alternative way of thinking, an alternative perception. And so..absolutely. So I think that, going back in time, after primary school, in a state of being less educated than when I went there..

My mother found a woman that used to come round to our house and teach me as a very young child (...some books at me) and just read, so I think that was maybe why I was able to, to read. I also remember my mother telling me that from a very young age, I think that this conflict between being in an environment where you're completely controlled and having a mother who allows you to control everything, it's, it's given me my own identity and grow as a human being. That was what(actuated) me to survive. For example, after a certain age, when I was three or four, I decided what I wanted to wear, how I wanted to wear it, so I had complete control over, she would have to dress me but I would be in

control (..) And my mother, I remember her, she would sit me in the kitchen on the surface and she would pour all her problems out to me. So I was very much able to communicate with her. So I think that those two things in parallel assisted me to, that was possibly the (stress machine) that helped me to survive.

And then after that I went to another Shaftesbury Society school, this time it was, it was like a natural progression and they sent me to Victoria House. Which has now been turned into luxury apartments. (..) It was huge, and looked beautiful from the outside. Again, another school that was hidden away, nobody would know it was there, unless you happened to take the wrong route there. And this school, I was there from the age of eleven until sixteen and that school was another, I was there at that school for, again that was a hideous. Terrible, no matter how much.. Every day was all about survival. I quickly realised that, again .. I could physically move around, I had an electric wheelchair, I was quite frustrated that all my peers had private wheelchairs that their parents bought them, but my father had always been quite shrewd with money, just wouldn't buy me my own electric chair, so I made do with, I made do with the one that the state give you for free. It was okay, and I think whilst at school it was, it was, the day was constant ridiculous rules and reviews (..) They were awful, actually. The last meal that we were fed was at four o'clock, and that'd be tea, and you'd have like (...) food, and after that there was nothing. Later on in the evening they'd bring a tea trolley around with tea and biscuits and Ovaltine (..) (We just became) starving. So we used to raid the kitchen. And there was nothing in the kitchen. The actual way it was run was so bad that it, it caused people to act badly, not badly but rebellious. Frustration.

And there are so many things I do remember. For example, at the end of the day. I mean we used to wander up and down this huge manor house, up and down the corridors, going through the ballroom, it used to be the ballroom, this was like the play area, they'd have nothing in it, it was just an old ballroom with a, and there was nothing in it, nothing. We used to wander round there aimlessly, doing nothing because there was nothing to do. And went through the corridors down to the other end and they allowed one of the classrooms to remain open and it had a television in it. That was our, we weren't allowed to

go outside into the grounds without permission. And.. that was it. So we used to wander round, up and down the corridors. There was no encouragement to study, even though they had a real curriculum, which was CSEs, up to CSE levels, and we were boarders, so we had no, we didn't have our parents so we just, so we just used to do whatever we wanted. As children we just used to play, I don't know what did we do? Just.. A lot of it was just wandering around. They had this rule that you weren't allowed to take your electric wheelchair upstairs, so back to this thing of taking me out of the electric wheelchair no later than nine o'clock, that was the latest that the seniors were allowed to stay in their chair for. And then they used to take us out of the chair and put us in the, the manual wheelchair and then take us upstairs and then wash and bathe us, so we were ready for bed.

I was able to sit up. They would prop me up, sit me up in bed so at least I was able to, you know, do things with the bed, I could do things in those days. So what I would, again what would I do, what would we do, we had no respect, I had no desire for education because there was nobody really interesting me, I just found it really boring, although I did manage to, I liked art, there was (no ..) I did win a prize for the school, John Noakes Prize where, it was a national competition where schools could enter, our school did and it was trying to get the kids to clean their teeth, so I did a really simple picture, toothbrushes in a line, queuing up to, at a Job Centre, so literally a queue of toothbrushes, and a door which said Job Centre and then the slogan was, 'Is your toothbrush unemployed' and we, that was really amazing? And I won it! So that was something good.

I mean the teachers were okay actually. The teachers were, were a, okay and they did their best. And so whilst the school (not great), in the schooling time it was good. But after, after 3.30 or whatever, the teaching stopped, we were then left to our own devices. At weekends we were left to our own devices. No activities were arranged. Staff used to often be, always be, in the staffroom smoking endless cigarettes. Or outside in the grounds congregated in one little huddle, smoking cigarettes. The mentality of these schools, staff would be always, you know, just degrading and patronising, but in a fun sort of way in which (...), so it's 'Hi! Hi, Julia! Have you got a new boyfriend?' You know, that type of nonsense, which I, I just don't gravitate towards. So that sort of jolly,

jolly rubbish, that wasn't really, for me, I was doing that, I hand-picked the staff that I liked and connected with. It was a struggle, I was able to control the environment that I was in, which was again a survival technique, not that I was aware of it, that I was.. I have a personality that was able to engage with the people I wanted to. So although the oppression that the school had and the regime, not taking us out. I visited the (...) town about, I was there for, I was at the school from the age of eleven to sixteen and in that time period I (visited the town) maybe less than five times. And that was, that was the activities. There weren't any activities, or one activity, when we went to Church., there was one activity when we went to somewhere in Cornwall, Churchtown Farm, that was really amazing, it was taking us out.

But there was a lot, there was a lot of, oh and we had a paedophile running around.. These types of schools do attract. But I wasn't around that until I was maybe fourteen or fifteen. And one of the ex-day pupils actually studied to become a lawyer, and he then went to the police with (..), he knew exactly where this member of staff kept his diaries. And the guy was arrested. I really, I wasn't one of the people that the paedophile was interested in. And I think that's mainly because I maintained a strong personality and just wasn't afraid of this type of person. I wasn't aware that was what was going on, but I was never ever enticed or invited to his flat where he used to carry disabled children upstairs to his, to his quarters and abuse them. I don't know the graphic details.

But, I never knew. His name was Griff and he had two, he was a really weird, strange-looking person and he had two sort of bobbles, these two balls on the top of his head, like skin, two lumps, a very distinctive character, he was bald on top (..) He was really weird, really ugly - in my opinion! I had no idea that he was (a paedo), no.. And I would not have had that concept in those days. So I would never have, I would never have realised, there no computers.

I do remember managing to get into CB radio, CB Radio, and that was when I started to make, Good God it sounds awful, oh my god, it sounds terrible.

A: No. Tell me more about CB.

K: It's all shit! As far as I'm, I don't think back to it. I called myself, my name was Powerful Lady, this was amazing, I don't remember what age I was, probably about fifteen, and this was like my, something that I was able to communicate with people outside of the school environment. And I found it the most liberating, exciting thing, it was just amazing. I was communicating outside of this, you know oppressive environment. I was absolutely addicted to it. That's what kept me occupied, just talking to all sorts of people and, not about anything much but just, I don't know it was just something to get access another world that I'd, (we were confined). You were just literally (living in a plughole?) But I think I was always very nervous to meet the people that I could communicate with on the radio (...) I never remember what we talked about, it was probably just a load of nonsense. But at the time it was exciting.

The Matron was an alcoholic. That's a true thing, she was an alcoholic.

A: Sorry, who was?

K: The Matron.

A: Oh right.

K: Maisie, her name was. Her background was that she came from a shoe shop. (..) She became a Matron of a school when she came with zero qualifications. And she was an alcoholic. I wasn't scared of her, I was just impartial to her, I could sense that she was ignorant, she was ignorant. But she managed to put the fear of, fear to people being quite intimidated by her. And I remember once putting a swastika moustache on her face, I couldn't physically do it, but I instigated it and it was publicly on display and she went absolutely, she was absolutely outraged by it. And she could never prove it was me because obviously I can't do it. So that was one of those moments where I was really very very happy.

A: So what sort of moustache was that?

K: A Hitler moustache.

A: A Hitler moustache.

K: On the photo. Of her. On the notice board. So that was one of my triumph moments. I think.. She was absolutely determined to find out who did it. I never admitted it because..why would I?

I went into her office and she had a lighter, I said oh let me have a look at your lighter, and I was trying to, 'Oh, that's nice!' (..) And I said, oh, let me just and I started trying to make it (..) With flame, and it did and it suddenly caught my head. And there she was frantically, absolutely petrified, because also that's a serious, you know offence if I'd ever said anything, which of course I didn't. But that used to give me great pleasure, her reaction of it managing to singe my hair (...) She actually, she'd actually died. After I left I found out a few years later that she was found in her kitchen where she'd just managed to drag herself, collapsed to the ground, that was how she died.

There was also the geography teacher who was also the headmaster. He was called Mr Pollard. He amazingly had something, there was a weird relationship going on, which I couldn't quite figure out, they always seemed to be in alliance with each other. He was a beer-gutted, belly, a bit bold. And he was the driver who drove us to the Churchtown Farm in the Sunshine Variety Bus. And I remember us putting tissues in our mouth and spitting all over his head while he was driving. His head was covered in like white tissues, lots of white tissues, lot of white dots, with tissue, so I remember that.

I think in those days the simple things were the things that.. that gave, gave me pleasure. It was great! Absolutely got into this whole thing of tissues, spitting, tissues, spitting. His whole head was covered with like... I enjoyed that.

So I think that the er, um, oh yes, I worry I'm telling you that the reason I'm aware I'm telling you the naked truth memories of the school, that's because, they were quite negative, but there were good times, but the good times were not made up by the school, it was made up by my own mental state and being able to communicate, but nothing that they, anything that they, they, what they

did, they didn't do anything to assist us to grow as individuals, or encouragement.

A: Right.

K: The teachers did a bit. I got on really well with the physio actually, Mrs Butler, I liked her a lot. I liked physio just because she was an intelligent person and communicated at a level that I appreciated. There were staff there that I did get on really well with, one of them was called Mercedes, she was Spanish, she was night staff (...actually) And she was great. She'd bring me in Pot Noodles, you know (...) She was a great person, I kept in touch with her for ever. So I did have very strong connections with people, so it wasn't like I was, I certainly wasn't a loner. I guess I was very much, not I guess I *was* in control of my autonomy, but when I'm thinking back of it now, it just makes me really sort of angry that such a place existed. I'm sort of (...) between fucking this amazing mansion and beautiful grounds, that would (fit any picture out), you know which would look amazing in a film set in antiquity, eighteenth century. But what went on inside was obviously this secondary school, there was abuse, because there was a paedo running around, you know, threatening the kids, saying to them if they'd agree to coming upstairs with him, he'd lift their (...), if they (would drop their... there'd be pain??) It was gross. I never heard about this until after he was arrested and it started to all unravel.(...) Think positively about that school but I think it is a disgrace, it's a disgrace. And the Shaftesbury Society still carries on to this day on this premise that they are doing something positive. I wasn't very interested because it's absolutely not true. It's real-life oppression, certainly what they were doing then. I've always been anti institutionalised environments, I just don't believe in them, I think they're dangerous places.

They had a gravel car park and I dared to take my chair, drive my chair across the gravel car park which sat in front of the main entrance. And I did drive my chair across the gravel car park down to the main gates. And again, the gravel car park was there to stop us being able to physically move. And when they found out that I did it, they confiscated my electric wheelchair from me, put me back into a regular chair. And I was a senior at this time, they moved me to the junior

dormitory and they wouldn't give a time as to how long it was gonna be. I rang up my parents, although that's not true because it wasn't so easy. I couldn't just ring them up because they were in Germany. They rang me once a week, at the weekend and, and, so I told them what had happened. I just said I can't bear it, I can't move. But anyway, that situation lasted a week. Mum and Dad were really supportive. It was difficult because they were in Germany.

One time the Matron wanted my parents to come to a meeting to talk about me, because I think I was being really, I had become really rebellious, and was really not, not, well I was actually, the circumstance is I was very wild. I went down to (..) My parents told me how they went into a room and the first thing Dad did was, the way the school had positioned the room for my parents was that they were at one end and..It was a hierarchy, the Matron and whoever they were seeing, they had Mum and Dad positioned in a way that they were, quite an intimidating position. So what Dad did was he went into the room staff started by removing all the chairs and he rearranged the chairs so that everybody was on equal, an equal ground. And then they tried to present me as a bully (...) Or whatever and my parents just wouldn't have any of it. I mean, I wasn't in the meeting but I know for sure they were completely challenged, not really passive about anything that they said (..)

I had information from my mother and I was able to articulate how I thought. They tried to expel me twice. Once for being caught smoking (..) Start to smoke because there's nothing to do. And the other one was the breaking and entry. It was just so ridiculous. The staff.. There was a hydrotherapy pool there, in the physio department. In the evening the staff were swimming in our pool, so a friend and I said, we're not having that, let's break in and watch them for something to do, just watch the staff swimming. For something to do. So anyway it was really simple, just open the door sneaking through, open it and watch the staff swimming. The staff were fine about it but when it got back to Matron we were up for being expelled although it was our pool. She was thinking of ways to expel me. She didn't like me and because of my complaints about the school and me telling my parents, the numbers at that school started to severely dwindle. So by the time I was ready to leave that school, a class had come down to about two or three people in a class. There were about twenty

people in the entire school. I know for sure that I influenced, I had a part in them dwindling pupils going there because. Absolutely. It's fascinating how there was hardly anybody in a class, but at the same time the reason for it is because, I never actually asked my parents, but I know for sure they would have (..) Because they weren't (..). So (..)

It was, the school was dreadful. And in the end my friend who had (..) And I say that because I (..) He was a really close friend and he died in his twenties. Anyway and his mother was (..)

So there you have the ending. My life changed for the better.

A: And then what did you go on to?

K: I went to..

A: You didn't go straight to college, did you?

K: I went to Hatchford Park School in Wokingham. And that was just amazing. That school was just so, it was just for an interim period. Because of my age. So I went to Hatchford Park School and it was just completely different, it was, the (dormitory?) was beautiful, the food was fantastic. Not private, it was just liberating in comparison to the two previous schools. I was only there for two terms but I loved it I felt, I dunno, I was respected, treated differently and treated as someone worth investing in, whereas the Salisbury schools they, they (...) They didn't see us as ever becoming productive, useful members of society. So the whole ethos there was just, keep you, keep you safe, well that's a contradiction, keep you warm and feed you, minimal. When there was a firework display, they used to create this pathetic little firework display on Guy Fawkes. We had to sit inside the school and watch it through the window. It was just ridiculous.

Is this okay?

A: It's great, yeah. D'you wanna stop for a bit?

(Break)

A: I'm not sure which direction to point you.

K: I think..

A: Obviously, we want to move into you being an artist. The other thing, given all the stuff you've talked about is independent living, how that happened for you.

K: Okay.

A: Those may be inter-related.

A: I think Hatchford Park school was actually liberated to .. a whole different ethos and it wasn't run by the Shaftesbury Society. So I think that's sort of what made it a far more productive experience in terms of you were allowed to go out, they were experimental etcetera. And from there I went to college, there were lots of things in the system that allowed us to go out, going to Cheltenham town centre, (..) The experience. And that's where I had my first quote 'real' relationship, with one of the members of staff. It was same-sex, so this had to be kept completely and utterly hidden. And I was very proud of myself because, despite being in the, in an institution, I managed to have a relationship with a woman whilst being a student at the college.

Anyway, it really was an education, BTEC courses. When I went there, when I first went there, you're shown round the, the President of the student union around the college, new students were taken around for a week, introducing us to everything in the college. I remember very distinctly him saying, oh watch the drama tutor and the art tutor, they're both lesbians. So I knew that I was entering into a very homophobic environment. I kept my, I was very discreet about my relationship that I was, that I found myself in. So yeah, and college was all about vomiting after getting too drunk, smoking cigarettes and just using it as a junior social experiment camp. This is basically what I did.

A: Yeah.

K: I enjoyed the freedom. So I'm moving away from the institutions and then.

A: What college was this?

K: It was the Star Centre in Cheltenham.

A: The Star Centre?

K: Yes. The National Star Centre. It's now changed. At the time that's what it was called. Oh yes, and I remember going to Hereward College. I went to colleges, I applied to go to Hereward College. And one of the questions that they asked me was 'How'd you get home from here if you didn't have your parents taking you? How would you get back to London? Didn't have a clue, I didn't have a clue (...) My academic achievements were (..) But they were enough. I think at the time the college didn't offer any night cover, I wasn't physically able to operate their bell or something. So I wasn't accepted into Hereward College. So that was, that was an absolute insult, I ended up at the Star Centre which I think was the reject sort of.. I don't know. At the Star Centre, but there was some good people there. But I made allowances for it. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was ill, went into hospital quite a lot with pneumonia because I was completely abusive to my own body, because I just didn't care, I was there to have fun.

And I was very, I was involved in the arts. I preferred art at the time to drama because when we had to learn lines and present, you know in theatre, I wasn't really confident enough to do that. Looking at a context, it was that I very much became involved in art, history of art, you know I just used to look at slides and er it was there, the tutor organised a trip to Paris, so we all went to Paris, saw Mona Lisa and then the rest of the time we were in French restaurants eating and drinking. But that was an amazing trip without your parents, so I really, I really enjoyed that. We all went round the Louvre, we hardly saw any art, it doesn't matter it was an amazing trip.

So after that I (...) My biggest, most important on my agenda was always independent living. I had to, I had to be in control, I couldn't bear to be living with my parents because although, you know, they were very supportive, so if you want to do anything at boarding school from the age of four and a half to sixteen, eighteen, Star Centre two years, You know, you've become quite independent, so I didn't want to live with them.

(If I'd gone to live with my parents) I'd just kill them. My father, from the army quite (..), quite controlling, very dictatorial, liked to have things his own way, I wouldn't want to live under that regime. So I (moved around/messed around?) D'you want me to talk about it? My prime focus was to, to be independent and to.., so I moved into this area because my Dad's last posting was in Woolwich. (...)

I took with me the person I was in a relationship. She came with me. But that all went wrong, she was completely.. That went wrong. I had to move.

I met Greenwich Association of Disabled People. There was a little church where they used to meet (..) Park, I think it was. I went to their offices and said, they said oh hullo, how can we help you. I said, no, how can I help you. What do you want me to do? So it wasn't like I was there to receive their help. I was there to see what I could do to be practically involved in something positive and progressive. I'd already sorted out my money, my dad bought a book on, more like a bible, it was the biggest book, a big thick book about benefits. I decided very quickly that I wasn't set up to thinking about work, you know I, I wasn't, I wasn't even a concept, wasn't a concept. So what I'd do was screw the system as much as you can, not screw it but just make sure that I got every entitlement I could, but not through working. And so my father bought a book and told me what to do. And I, I also decided that I would have to make it look like my parents were, I (saw on the wall) that I had to get accommodation, because my parents would have said 'Oh yeah, Katherine coming back home, we don't mind'. I wouldn't have got presented anything. So I had to have a, a sort of, I had to make it look like it was a very separated relationship with my family. So that was my first priority. Get into somewhere in this area. So,

trying to speed this up, managed to do that, I remember being made to see how many social workers could visit me and I said to her, not for me and she said, well, there's the local day centre that you could go to. And I was absolutely (...) I'm your age, I said, I'm a similar age to you, I said would you like to be deposited, is that all that you can, is that it? And I realised then that there was no point in doing anything through social services because their way of thinking is so limited and so absolutely, yeah just (..) It was unbelievable. Anyway, that would have been a day centre literally on the estate that I was living on. So I could actually freely integrate in the urban area at my discretion. Which I did. So I went around the day centre, when I wanted, and when I felt like it and (...) And so I had to rely on these hideous turquoise buses that would pick the disabled up. And I just remember wandering round this day centre, about seventeen, eighteen, no I must have twenty, thinking what the hell is this? What the fuck? I couldn't understand what for me at the time was all these zombies walking around, there were some people in wheelchairs and some people just who were, thinking that they were somewhere else. And I didn't understand, I didn't get it, I thought what the hell, what is this, what is this place?

I pulled away from this. And that's when I discovered mental illness. And I hadn't realised it was a mixture of people with mental health and physical disabilities. So that was my introduction to mental health and I became fascinated by it. It includes me, I find it interesting, so it wasn't like I was scared, I just was completely curious. (..) It was something I'd never, ever come across. That was interesting. But apart from all that I also started to, you know analyse the whole thing, realised that day centres were dumping grounds for - dumping grounds, that was it. (...) We used to do basket-weaving. There were all sorts of things. It isn't a day centre now, it's occupied by Guardian residents.

Anyway, I went there for a bit, learnt some basic computer skills from a guy who used to come in. And then, that was a period of time, my partner had become quite abusive, so I had to deal with that in a way that again I controlled the situation, found her a new partner. It was quite a strategy. At the time it was very important that it wasn't made public. The last thing I wanted was the fucking paparazzi, 'Victim of an abusive relationship'. So that was dodgy.

A: You say you found her a new partner

K: Yeah. I worked it out. Again, I worked out a strategy to encourage her to find someone else. And it sounds terrible, but I had to do it. It was, it took me a year and a half to get out of the, when I first wanted to leave her she threatened to commit suicide. I was too young to handle this nonsense but my Mum and Dad were very respectful, just allowed me to deal with it in my way. And I think that, for me, it's really if I'm not given the reins to control, I can deal with *any* situation, as long as I'm just given the ability to do that. When people start taking in, or going over me, I find that very, very intimidating. So I did with it what I thought was (...), because it was really much, never, ever became a public thing, so I was really..

Anyway, so that was that. It was just unfortunate that that's who I was. I think that if you don't come from an abusive family, it's, it's something that you don't. (..)

And then I..(..)

There were really interesting people at the Greenwich Association of Disabled People. Like Rachel Hurst, Ann Rae. Ann Rae was amazing, she helped me stop this bloody awful relationship.

A: Oh, yes, Ann Rae used to live round here, didn't she, before she moved up to Manchester. I'd forgotten that.

K: And it was through her wisdom and intellect and supportive measures that were about spreading right (..) And I did a moonlight flit, with Ann's support and assistance. They found me a bedsit, a brand new bedsit ..authorised to move out of the house. My ex-partner was asleep upstairs, because she never used to get up until the middle of the afternoon. I moved out and I think that's when I started to take complete control of my life. And start living. (..) Stating that she wouldn't let me see the bills, she was in control of everything. I wasn't allowed to see the bills. I was literally just a cash machine that she could benefit

from and do very little. It was really hideous. But, you know, again I still had friends, she'd been jealous of all my old friends. But once I moved into that bedsit, it was like starting from scratch. So I'd got my complete independence now and I was now going to start living. And that's when I started to get involved in what was going on around me. I was very much involved with GAD (...) Rachel Hurst, Ann Rae, Ricardo, I don't know whether you remember him in GAD, but he was Housing Officer there, he was brilliant and again, in terms of people to just learn from, without even realising what you're learning from them, you sort of watch and observe and pick up stuff and for me that was a natural, it was like someone was telling me you must do this and the whole being, you know aware and understanding the difference between the social and the medical model and all these things were (really ..) for me. It sort of just added to my assertiveness at the time. I went on an assertive course, that was really helpful, that was the thing then, everyone was doing assertive training, so that was really helpful.

A: I taught one of those once.

K (Surprised.) What? Really?

A: Johnny Crescendo gave me a ring when he was filling in for Barbara at Camden and said, 'Allan can you do assertiveness training for disabled people?' I said yeah, sure, no problem. And then ran out and bought all the books on assertiveness that I could find and worked out a two-day course.

K: You could. It was really helpful for me. Seriously helpful. But I think, I think we, you know, it wasn't really, really focusing on.. I think at the time it was (...)environments in terms of schooling, education It was all about being in control of, you know, going to bed, getting up when ever I wanted., that was my first priority.. And then after that, it was living. So it was (literally?), I used to go round with Veronica, and it was all the time, eating, drinking.. Eating, drinking, we had this very non-focused existence, we just used to hang around, go places and shop and.., holidays when we could.

A: How did you meet Veronica? Through GAD?

K: No, she was introduced to me through this.. I started to, I dunno, it was like disabled lesbians, going to something that was to do with rights and then I was introduced to her by this feminist woman that hated men and all this weird, and I, with Veronica, we just became the best of friends. Veronica's lifestyle, I could have kept up with that for I think, I dunno how long, two years but I think after that you start to, for me I needed more.

A: I can remember the the the the, in terms of the Campaign for Accessible Transport, the two of you being very much..

K: We were..

A: The Greenwich mob, I thought of you as.

K : We were, it was fun, (..) it was exciting, it was really exciting.

A: I remember when you wanted to kidnap a bus driver. I had to talk you out of it.

K: Really?

A: Yes. Essentially what you were talking about was having your PAs kidnap a bus driver. And while a court might not send you down because they'd take pity on it, they be likely to be a lot less sympathetic to PAs.

(..)

A: So you were knocking around with Veronica.

K: I was knocking around with Veronica. I got involved in CLIC, which was an independent photographic project, at the time based in Greenwich, that was really good, black and white photography, it was a project run by, I can't remember. Anyway it was a very good thing. Not in any particular order, I became involved in GYPT, which was Greenwich Young People's Theatre, that was really good for me, Old Vic Theatre, that was very good for me, it took me to

theatre for young people.

I remember trying to, it was an accredited course and I got distinctions and they applied for me to go to university to do a BA in Theatre, and I was turned down, all of them were saying the same, sharing the same sentiments that while they felt I would very much be able to cope with the theory side, I don't have the physical ability to.. They suggested Graeae, I felt no, I'm not going to be involved in Graeae, because I want to make it academic. So I wasn't interested in being, just joining Graeae just to be in the theatre, I wanted to go to university.

And so I, and that's what changed my course. I decided art, fine art, and so that's how, I felt they were more open, and they were able to, they weren't giving these restrictions that the theatre was at the time. And so that's how I became an artist.

I went to Guildhall University, it's opposite Whitechapel Gallery, where I did my BA. I did the foundation first to deliver the qualifications that I took into BA. After my BA I ended up going out with a tutor. After. After. So that was dreadful.

I loved the foundation because it opened up the whole concept of art, I mean it wasn't just this thing about drawing something, drawing what you see. I created a visual diary, visual reference scrapbook, things I was thinking around that I'd never considered before, we'd certainly never been taught that at any of the previous schools or colleges. So foundation in fine art, the course for me was about creating a portfolio, so that you could then present that to get onto a BA course. Mainstream, no special facilities, what I had was my P.A. When I needed to, I would just direct her if I wanted anything, get that (..)stand, get that bit of paper, stick it there, so I was doing it but not physically doing it, drawing, I could still just about move enough to draw a bit, I used to go to the life drawing but I'd feel that all my people used to look like they were disabled. When I tried to draw able-bodied bodies, they always looked a bit disabled.

I could draw, I was able to draw, I love drawing. I took that course very seriously and got it, got the portfolio. When I went to the university and they

accepted me and I started my three year B.A., fine art and er this progression, I remember making a construction, I wanted to make a cube, a space in which someone, a transparent space in which somebody could go into and I wanted the breathing mach.., I wanted it to be like a sculpture stroke sound installation, so somebody could go into it and hear the sound of the breathing machine. So you didn't see it, it'd be just a sound piece.

A: Hear the sound of what, sorry?

K: The breathing machine.

A: Oh yeah.

K: So I made this thing with the P.A., who.. I had no skills whatsoever in construction and neither did the P.A., so at first attempt it collapsed! That meant (..) A hand to deliver my concept, because I was just hopeless, I just get that piece of wood there, does that look like the same width as that piece. I wasn't doing it in theory, in a theoretical way, I was just looking at it and trying to work out how to, how to put it up. My video, we had a show of work, was a black and white video called 'Slapping'.

A: Yeah. I remember that.

K: That was all about presenting an image, if I think about it now, it was looking at inequality, the concept of inequality conflicting with equality. Have you seen it?

A: Yeah. A number of times.

K: It was about presenting a black and white image where neither were.., they were equal, neither was more equal than the other, and slapping because we were somehow, there was a physical, a physical interjection, running on a loop. (There was somebody?), I was looking at the idea of, um, this is disabled people, representation of disability, certainly then was (well...actually), was always seemed to see people as The Victim. I was trying to create (..) sense of there was no victim. There was no victim, there was no hero, there was no, it was a

sense of equality in a minimalist state, there was it was saying something and I think at the time it was really important not to, it's not about verbalising it, it could be, as I was more of a visual artist, about trying to, you know, present equality between two people, one who's obviously physically disabled and the other person who isn't and presenting that image, trying to, the concept behind it was to create an equality even though the initial reading would be inequality.. That is again trying to get into (one set of grouping that look at something). And immediately see, make assumptions. So I was trying to re-rep, re- ... another way of representation that wasn't sort of poetically charged or making it, you know I'm not coming from a political standpoint but more within the aesthetics of art, I think.

A: Yeah.

K: So that's what's going on.

A: I think it's a very interesting piece. Very, very shocking piece for non-disabled people to look at. Because there's two themes. 'One is 'You can't hit a disabled person!' But the other is 'You're disabled, you can't be angry!' It challenges both of those at the same time.

K: Exactly. That was doing that. And by not putting big statements on it or charging it as a political piece or, or turning it, trying to, you had to think, you had to engage with it. And, like you say, representation of disability is often so charged in a way that one is told how to see disability, when you're not told, it's just there, that is interesting. And it throws people into a whole disarray, like, oh, this isn't a documentary about disabled person's struggles, it provided, it purposefully negated medical social models, it was, the reality of it was to exist as a focal point in which you couldn't, you could not easily be, er, it's something like the urinal, you know Duchamp, he took it out of its familiar surroundings, what's its purpose? You put it in a gallery and people are fucking mystified by it. Suddenly they're looking at it from a whole different perspective. I think that's what I was doing, taking disability out of its normal you know surroundings and television and political and documentation, you know tragic documentation, documentaries, and just removing it to a place where it's in an entirely different

space, and not creating any, you know...

That work was, that was something I..And I won a prize, I won the end of year prize, so that was a proud moment.

A: You know Nancy Willis wn that prize several years before you?

K: Did she?

A: It's awarded by two people from outside the collecge, isn't it, who come in..

K..

A: But Nancy had won the same prize several years earlier. Which I think is to do with the fact that, I think that students, they haven't got life experiences really. But disabled people do. And I think actually disabled people, if they've managed to get into a course like that, they come to it with more stuff to speak about.

K: I'd been doing nothing for a few years, other than drinking with Veronica and being stupid, you know, falling in and out of relationships., I then started to (very much on the counter of my mother??) I must say, although that's when I decided to move out. And then I think, at the time (....) get out. Then I had to, I had like a break from art, then I went back in time to do an M.A.. With encouragement from my mother, because I kept telling my mother don't be ridiculous, thinking about my education.

A: So the course at London Guildhall was a foundation and a B.A.

K: No, that was a B.A.

A: Yeah, I'm making the distinction. Before we move on to the M.A...

K: Right.

A: In, in, in the degree show where 'Slapping' was on show there, wasn't it?

And there was another piece on show there.

K: At the MA. There were two pieces. The B.A. there was just nothing.

A: So where was the M.A., was that at..

K: Goldsmiths.

A: At Goldsmiths? Ah. Tell me about the M.A. then.

K: I had a break, I graduated with my B.A. in 1999, then I went in to do a part-time, a year, so it was a two-year part-time course at Goldsmiths College. And I graduated in 2004 and won the Warden's Purchase Prize. Which was really good.

(Background noise)

And then I did the pop video. I like that. I did another piece that was not so good, but it never, I don't know... I think the M.A. gave me, opened up my mind in terms of I went, I'd already in between my art at college, doing my B.A., I'd become very involved in disability art. And I was aware that my work was, was effective in that environment. But I wanted, I needed more. I needed it to be really critiqued. I wanted it to sit in a, it would always (..) with disabled people, because how could it not, that's my life

A: It's always what?

K: ...The background that I have, my work will always sit (certainly there, everywhere?) in a disability context. But I wanted it to be scrutinised more. I needed harsher critique. And I wanted it to be, I wanted to make it somehow, get it out of a cliché. I wanted to get, I wanted to lift it out of the ghetto and do it so that it was aimed to be seen for a wider audience because I didn't wanna (..), I didn't wanna be, it was important for me that the work didn't become part of a ghetto, that was very important. It needed to get out there. And I wanted to push my mind harder.

A: Yeah.

K: Really, really was really important. Because it's all very nice to go 'oh, I'm a bit different', but it's not really helpful.

A: Yeah

K: So I needed to be, I wanted to be critiqued and also, that's why I went to Goldsmith's. Shall we talk about that next time?

A: Okay.

A: Because it is a huge (...) And I think that's what changed, that that whole sort of way of thinking, it was just a catalyst, it was the beginning.. And I think Aaron Williamson was such a huge influence of how, I mean I've told him that many times but he doesn't see that (in me) but of course he was. He taught me to think, not like a tutor and a student, he came to me, he was the one that wanted to.

A: This was who?

K: Aaron Williamson.

A: Oh, right.

K: He was the one that wanted to work with me and he loved what I was doing and he was the one that, and so I'm 'Great'.

A: Was this while you were doing the M.A.?

K: I was near to the end of the M.A. I didn't know who he was. We'd both applied to something which was being organised at Sadlers Wells, and so disabled people, we applied autonomously, I didn't know him, I (didn't know any of them?). I got an opportunity to show a piece of work, so I was one of the artists selected, and he showed some work with his collective at the time, Fifteen

Millimetre Films (..)

And we had an opportunity to show our work at Sadlers Wells, it was a one-day event. And that's where I met Aaron. And it was just this person that introduced us, and that's how we formed an alliance.

A: D'you reckon that's the place to stop for today?

K: Yes.

Part Two

(Issues with recording levels.)

A: Right. There was a couple of things that came up at the end of last session. One particular, when we talked about Nancy, I mentioned she'd been told she wouldn't live long into adult life. And you said you'd been told the same thing. Do you want to talk about that?

A: I think just briefly. I think it's something that a lot of disabled people experience. Certainly then, and probably still now, is that life expectancy isn't going to be very good. So that was sort of stamped in orange imprint on my brain at an early age. (..) Also by the fact that because I went to special schools, disabled people with Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy were dying all round me, so I didn't want to be sat there thinking, I wonder when it's going to be my turn, my time to die. So I wasn't really given any information as to the difference between Duchenne or spinal muscular atrophy. They were weak and I was weak, I just saw (ahead of me?....) And it's conditions, disability. Plus the added thing the added point that I was told by the staff live for today, you could be dead tomorrow. And my parents were also told you'll be lucky if she lives past the age of eight, when the other fact was that my mother's first child had the same disability as me but only lived till he was seventeen and a half months of age. And then my parents were advised by medical, medical people, wait five years and then try again.. And so they tried again, and because mum and dad had the gene that creates, is the main gene, it meant that for every child they had, it would be likely that they would, it was a high percentage that their child would have SMA. So I was born, they waited five years and my brother came along, who doesn't have SMA. Eleven months later, I do have SMA, it was slightly an improved version of the brother that I never met that died, cause I was slightly stronger than him, he needed far more assistance at an early age. There are different types of SMA that you are born with.

A: Has that affected you, being told that?

K: Being told that I might die? Oh yeah, absolutely, it sort of, it gave me zero

expectations in terms of I don't know what to put in in the.. The school that I went to, which like I said was a special school, there was no emphasis on independent living or what we might become. I don't know whether that was just of the time, or whether that was because I was in a disabled, segregated school for physically disabled children. I actually fairly relieved that there was no encouragement for us to be anything or achieve anything because the mentality of the school wasn't about that, it was just about looking after us, giving us a basic education. And so, I think I said earlier in my sort of um , my plans for my future, was to trty and (stay?...). While there was this knowledge that I could die at any time, so I eliminated all plans and then when I did start to live a bit longer after all, I'd like to get into another Shaftesbury Society home after this, where I can be with other people with a similar disability to myself and be able to watch TV and go out, but that was it, that was my life's ambition. It was really right down to hardly anything.

My parents had the idea that maybe they would buy a (..) bungalow in Breething in Norfolk where, the idea was that when I left school we all would be a happy family and live in a big bungalow in Breething. But luckily (..)I was reaching fifteen, seventeen. At fifteen I had become quite rebellious and having my own mind and there was absolutely no way that I would ever want to live with my parents, because my father was from an army background and his, he was running the family like a military operation. My mother was different, but he was very, my father was very controlling and there's no way that I would be able to live like that. I think through the process of going to boarding school that the relationship between myself and the family unit was, it was slightly divorced insomuch as I actually, I had no friends when I went off in the holiday times because all my friends were at the school. It mean that I actually preferred, it became that I preferred the institutionalised environment over the home of my parents. So it was a a very, that's how it sort of changed. And I preferred to be at school, even though the school was completely, completely oppressive. At the same time I found a way to stay in control and really do what I wanted to do within the limitations that were placed on us.

A: Okay, thank you. Coming back to, moving on from where we go to with the last, last time, we were talking about how you had left the Star College..

K: The Star Centre was an amazing place I talk about it a lot. It was amazing, because it wasn't run by the Shaftesbury Society group. And..it was like a holiday camp. And again, because I had zero expectations in terms of thinking about future, I just didn't plan any sort of future. And there I just learned to live. I wasn't interested in any of the BTEC courses that they were offering anyway, because I never envisaged myself working in an office, even though my mother was a top secretary. That just wasn't of interest to me. So what I learnt at the college was, one I learnt, it was like just a freedom, you could buy a packet of cigarettes and smoke them, you could, you know there was trips that you could get onto a coach and be dropped off in the town centre at weekends. It was absolutely an amazing, empowering, at last I had freedom to sort of move around, a bit more like a normal person. That's something that I'd never had before in terms of when I went to the schools. This was also a special college, for disabled people only. And you know, that's where I learnt who I was, against the fact that it was a very, it was still an institution and very shallow in its viewpoints. I made, I was a part of, I had an elite group of friends that I would just be with, a very small group of friends. And that was very..and I know, I was just able to come into myself there. In terms of the right type of relationship and...

A: Moving forward. To try and move beyond where we were last time, you'd avoided moving in with your parents, found somewhere to live in Woolwich.

K: Well, my father was in the army (*Background noise -plane?*) Because his property was through the army, he was able to, I was allowed to live in an army flat.

A: Ah, right.

K: As a temporary basis for us waiting to be rehoused .

A: Oh, I see.

K: And that's how it happened. So it was really, really nice to have army

accommodation.

A: Good for the army.

K: Yeah (..) And so that's what happened, I went into an army flat, I took the partner that I'd had at college with me, so she became my carer.

A: Was that the abusive relationship?

K: That happened..

A: And then you got out of that..

K: I got out of that.

A: And that's about where we'd got to.

K: I got out of that thanks to Ann Rae, then moved into the purpose-built bedsit in Greenwich, which was one room ,with separate bathroom, kitchen. And I was there and that's where I stayed. I was given volunteers and PAs.. The fact is that I was able to be in control of my life completely, then I sort of, up until, yeah I was totally in control. And that's when I started to become more and more involved in the community and in disability-related stuff such as CAT, the Campaign against Accessible Transport

A: *For* Accessible Transport.

K: (laughs) For! And that was, it was run by Tracy Proudlock

A: Tracy Booth she was then.

K: Oh, yeah! I liked her style, which was really dynamic and interesting and radical. I went to all these secret meetings. And after that it was taken over by Alan and I wasn't so keen, I didn't really want to be..

A: That's Alan Holdsworth.

K I felt like I couldn't be part of the herd of sheep. I'd gone past that stage of wanting to be told what to do, how to do it, when I was starting to think for myself and realised that actually there was probably a far more..better strategies to do with than what Alan was advocating at the time.

A: Through DAN.

K: Yeah, DAN was.. *(Break to check recording)*

A: Recording, yeah.

K: I think, I think, you ask me about my work and what can I make work, I think that my sort of way of thinking about all of that is all about oh I'm a disabled person, I've got so much to (..). I don't think that..It's not what I think, it's not what I have, I just make work that I think is absolutely vital and it isn't about preaching or trying to, trying to tell people this is what you must, this is how you should think and this is what it's all about. My work is about presenting a piece of work and then putting it out there and people can think what the hell they want to think. It isn't prescriptive. So I'm not saying, like, somebody for example like Mat Fraser who in the past his work was very much about trying to educate people about thalidomide. So I don't do that, I'm not trying to educate people in *anything*.

What I'm doing is something different, it's a different approach, it's an, an approach that I'm playing with people, I'm taking them on emotional sort of roller coasters. And I'm fucking up their minds. Because I think it's far too generous to be explaining to people and telling them what it is to.. , you know that I .. You will never hear me say I have spinal muscular atrophy and this is what it is to live with it. But it does enter into the work in a way that can't be so, it isn't going to relate to anything that they may have read or not read about you know, the situation, be it disability or not. I, I don't see myself as..because I think the more you are the type of person who..I think it's more open to interpretation if you don't stereotype your own work. And I think that.. That's not how I want

to make work, so I'm not actually saying, I'm trying to make it more about psychology of what's unbelievable. And also a basis from a .. a fun perspective. In saying that, it's not about eliminating anything. So it's not about eliminating disability, but it isn't about only people with some connection to disability will understand the work, because I think once that happens the work is restricted by who can or cannot relate to it.

So this is why the work that I make at present is about, I'm trying to think of instances, it's about illuminating stuff out there, but looking at it from a fresh, from a fresh perspective with a, in a way that is, is completely different. While it has me in it, it isn't creating sort of, a set of scenarios that are easily palatable by an audience. So for example 'Miracle of Life', I've literally picked up all the worst sentiments that come hand in hand with somebody who's weak and needing full-time assistance, can't read very well or swallow, I've completely turned it to myself, presenting myself as a victim as opposed to a heroic paralympian or this heroic woman with a disability who is so self-assured that she or he is telling people how we need to think and how discrimination is out there and it's really, it's all wrong. I don't do that. I, I actually sort of immerse myself into that fucked-up position that society has on disability per se or (straight...?) And then intentionally ridicule myself to the audience and then they are not able to do it, I guess, or are thinking what the fuck is going on here, there's something not quite right but I can't put my finger on it.

A: What was the name of that?

K: 'Miracle of Life'.

A: Miracle?

K: 'Miracle of Life'.

A: Miracle, that's the word I missed, yeah.

K: I went to, I was asked to do an artist's talk, what's the name of that university, it's somewhere outside London. Stratford Upon Avon. And I was asked to lecture an artist's talk. I didn't want to do a straight talk, because I don't do, I

refuse to do straight talks. So I went there as a victim and presented everything from a victim's perspective. And that was the talk I gave to the students. They really didn't know how to.. to respond or to relate. And a lot of them felt really baffled by what I was doing. And some of them got it. And I think that's the point I'm making, I don't make things easy for people.

Because that's who I am. I went there to do a (...) I also tend to do (..) While I talk and deliberately, I'm sort of setting it up to make it as if you were watching paint dry. So it's all contrived. Everything I do is contrived. So for example, I would say oh hi everyone, thanks for being here today, it was a really quite a sort of horrendous journey getting here and I'm really grateful to you for being able to come here today because I don't get out much. So what I do is I'm filling them with utterly regurgitated all the sort of negativity that people have on disability, either consciously or subconsciously, spewing all over them. And that's how I would do that talk. So that's what I do.

What I do, I'm quite inventive in terms of I might have a piece of work for one thing, but I re-invent it in the workshop. So for example I had a film which is animated, got animation, it's still animation. And it's called, it's about a stick person who's doing all sorts of things that you wouldn't expect a disabled person to do. It's very crudely drawn in Photoshop, under my direction. And it's of a(..) person in a wheelchair and doing things like they're shooting babies, running over ducklings and they're, they're all part of a charity, which is a charity run by 'Together for Short Lives'. And we have this image of a stick person in a wheelchair with pillows on their lap and a sort of connection there is they're about to put the pillows over the babies' faces to kill them.. So, you know, I try to make it as sick as I can. So that's what's going on in my head when I made that particular film. What I'm doing is I'm presenting it in a sort of, as an artist's talk. I will sort of say, you know, as an artist I do a lot of painting, I stick the brush in my mouth or wherever it will go and, you know, I really get a lot out of..so what I do is I create an inspirational profile for why I'm making work. And so actually what you're doing is you're juxtaposing the complete opposite of why you're doing it to what the visuals are.

So I present myself as this really sort of earnest artist who's making work as a, as

a hobby rather than as creative process. And that's really the essence to my work. It's that completely, just twisting everything around, so that it isn't.. Because to me that's interesting and exciting about playing to those models that are inspirational and motivational and (..) When actually I don't see myself as any of that stuff. I don't gravitate towards disabled people that see themselves as role models. I've done quite a lot of sort of research on disabled people that do this and It's just so hideous, so horrendous. I guess what I'm saying is that I used to get my stimulus from the disability Workhouse, now I've gone on to the internet and seeing really what I consider to be very sort of misleading representations of disabled people. I find it all so nauseating. But that has also helped me to redevelop work that also challenges those, it turns this notion that disabled people are iconic in any sense (of the phrase) on its head. Because nobody will see my work as major art, it's just so good. Oh that's just really lovely, Katherine's really trying to say something here, cause she's said it really well. If they wanna do that, the work will never do that. Just can't do that, sorry.

It is really good when there is work out there that does it, because you need all sorts of work. I just, d'you know what I mean (..) interested. So I think there are some artists out there that are, you know that will be trying to, the work is really important and it is giving off strong powerful messages. But I'm sick and tired of those strong powerful messages, so I, I create a different formula, a different, just a different way of engaging, so you can't.. So I guess the viewer is forced to engage in a way that can't be so stereotyping. Does that make sense?

A: Yeah.

K: Are you sure?

A: Yes. Tell me, how did you get into working with Aaron?

K: Um. We both were, we were both recipients of art, we both applied, I didn't know Aaron until I met him for the first time at Sadler's Wells, at an opportunity for disabled artists to pitch an idea. All I know is that this is where the work ended up at a sort of day , few hours, one exhibition at Sadler's Wells. And so a

lot of disabled artists applied to be accepted, their applications were accepted, if the application was accepted, they got the opportunity to do a piece of work at Sadler's Wells. So at the time he had a piece of work which he'd made with Fifteen Mm films, which was a collective that he had set up (..) disabled artist

A: What they called?

K: They used to be, they don't exist anymore. Fiteen, one five, em em films.

A: Fifteen Millimeter films.

K: Yeah. So he was there doing that and I was there completely independently doing my thing, but we were both coming from film perspectives. He really liked what he saw, that I was doing, and so he, this other person introduced us. He really liked what I was doing and so. And then I became the editor. He just liked my concepts and he could see what I was doing. I never told him anything, he just he really liked it and so he, he approached me, I didn't know who the hell he was. And, we just, I liked his sensibility, he was, you know, intelligent bright, charismatic person, but was really just completely clued in on disability stuff. And for me he didn't form part of the ghetto, he was an outsider literally, he could., he wasn't confined to just disability arts, he was able to go outside of it and in it. And he's funny. I found his humour funny.

And it's really, you know, and so in a way quickly able to establish a working relationship. And we weren't sat there for hours trying to educate each other, we already had the, that education that one needs when it comes to disability politics, enough to be able to make art that we, that fucks around with people. And I think that's how, you know we formed the Disabled Avant-Garde and we got commissions. Again, at that time it was very difficult to get anyone to write about the work. None of the critics wanted to write about the work because they didn't know how to communicate about it. They could only see it through the eyes of sentimentality. They weren't able to see it for the art is is, or was.

A: Yup.

K: And so it was very difficult to get reviews. That was the struggle. Even

today, when we have, you know, trying to (..) And get, get work as disability art it's not always easy, because to try to, our ideas are so forward thinking, people, it doesn't, it doesn't fit in to the sort of medical rules that people, whether they know that or not, are, are used to. So it, they struggle to commission, that's not just me saying that because, I believe that, I'm sure that if someone like Liz Crow was to approach the Arts Council (....) I know someone recently who got a, really lot of money to make a piece of work. And basically it was about her pain and suffering. And that's what they like to commission. They continue to want to commission work and it's like, I shouldn't say this but, don't mention the names, like Rachel what's her name, Gadston..

A: Rachel Gadsen

K: Yeah, her work is celebratory, it's about you know, you know she goes to these sort of third world cultures and then gets them all to, gets the people to paint and it's a way of them becoming stronger, it's what the community... I mean, it's not so much that it's bad but, but, what the Disabled Avant-Garde wants to do, what I like to do is make work that really doesn't embrace disability in the sort of way of saying aren't we fantastic and aren't we great and by showing this work more and more of us are all going to become empowered, you know and just by watching it you're going to understand our lives better and really that we'll become equal, it's just bullshit, absolute bullshit. But it seems that commissions aren't, even with Unlimited, they're not interested in work that's going to create controversy. (...) That's why they love someone like Sue Austin, who swims around underwater in a wheelchair. And they like people like (.....) I'm not saying their work is bad, but it isn't doing what, what the work that I would do, which would be actual completely different sensibility. And it wouldn't be work that could be seen as beautiful or celebratory, it's another type of work, but it is, it is saying something. But as many people can't read, they won't be able to engage. That's why I think the live art scene is where I've sort of found my niche. I feel comfortable within that scene, knowing that they, that they get it, irrespective of disability. And all the work that I do is very much, now that I'm more aware of the answer to the live art scene, it seems to be very much put

within that sort of scene, which is outside the mainstream. I mean Lost Voice Guy, he just won the, won Britain's Got Talent. And that actually is something that..I felt, I don't really like anything he does. It's mainstream, it's just mainstream gags. My work is not about trying to make an audience laugh.

A: You read the stuff about him on DAO? Somebody was very critical of, of his stuff.

K: It's not about him personally, seems like a lovely guy but, you know everything about that sort of show, even though I watch it, is quite nauseating. It's just opposite of everything that I'm..It's not sharp, it's not (...), it's not really.. It's just sort of like gags that we've all heard before, but you know they're all collated in such a way that, you know, it works, it works, I guess but if I was, you know having a party, I would not be inviting him to (...) Absolutely not.

A: Is your work as the disabled Avant-Garde different from the solo work?

K: I think it's, I think it's, I think Aaron's probably, I think what's good about, I really like working for Aaron, it's just easy. He comes up with an idea and we both do brainstorming, and often he comes up, you know, with strong ideas and because they're so good, I don't really, I'm not into sort of saying, oh no, why don't we change, why don't we turn it into.., it's just a waste of fucking time. If the idea's good, then just leave it and get on with it. And so, he's very easy to work with and a hundred percent reliable. He can source anything, he can do anything and so for me working with him is a real pleasure. And, you know because we are ultimately taking the piss, but Aaron's very good at intellectualising anything that we do in a superb way. And I think that the work I do with him is slightly different because um, but it still has that same thing going through it, which is very much, you know, against, you know against the grain, going against, you know, how, how society, the expectations that society holds in everything, not just disability, we had such a good idea for the Unlimited round this year and they just didn't even invite us to have a talk.

We wanted to open up a spa in Spitalfield Market and have like a, a, a stall, like an area where people could come and be pampered by the Disabled Avant-Garde. It was such a good idea, people would come in and we'd puff up their ego and, it was structured, and they won't work like that because it doesn't follow the strands that Unlimited are wanting to achieve.

A: Who was this?

K: Unlimited.

A: Unlimited?

K: We weren't even invited for an interview. (...) It was a while ago but.. We really wanted to, we were going to run our own sort of, we were thinking about actually having our own Spastics Shop, but we wouldn't call it Spastics Shop, we'd call it something good. And we would come into this space and it would all be where it all went on workwise, we'd have like little badges that were promoting the Disabled Avant-Garde. And then there's mainstream stuff like (...) So we're talking about using that sort of, that aesthetic to recreate a shop where you went into and it was all like (...) But it was like experiencing I don't know, like brain-curling disability, the sort of garbage that's out there and the trash that people can buy. But we've created that trash inside a sort of shop, like a DAG Spastics' Shop or something. I mean I worked (with Aaron very well). It was, at the time It would (...) It would have just been hilarious. And also covert cameras, we were going to film it a bit, no, not covert, we were going to film it a bit like The Only Way is Essex, turn it into like a live sort of, and we were saying things deliberately to the public that were provoking towards disabled people. And again, Unlimited won't run that type of stuff. They don't want it because it's too, it doesn't fit within the very small alcove of what they like to commission.

So I think when I do things with Aaron it's sort of, you know it's exciting and we think, if we're actually getting funding, we throw up very good ideas. But often, when you haven't got the funding your ideas are more, smaller because of

there are loads of restrictions, you have to think in terms of DIY aesthetics. For example, the (Vehicle of Life) which I've turned into a karaoke song, which I've used in my live art performances to date. The idea was eventually to turn it into a video, so that it would sit amongst the most awful disabled songs. The background behind that was, everything that you, I know that you don't use, everything on YouTube or the internet, everything to do with my disability, or disability per se always has this sentimental music.

And there's all this stuff, all these role models or this guy that's got no arms and legs but does this song. And it was really terrible, and he's a preacher, he's a pastor as well (Image of the two events together??) Anyway, I'll have to show you that one day. And so my idea was to create, to do a song called 'Vehicle of Life', which, I was, the words are just horrendous, I even paid a composer I'd worked for in the past and (he had) loads of research material to make me this really trashy, this really nauseating original soundtrack, okay, which (caused) the song. I put up, I made a crowd-funding live and I created this terrible profile about me trying desperately to get funding because I hadn't got long to live and I wanted to write my last (..). And I got over four grand. Which I haven't even spent. It's still there waiting to be used. So what I say is I've set things up that were (..) around with people's heads. So I've (..) myself in a crowd-funding thing as a victim. And I wrote it from a third person. So I got someone, I wrote it of course, but this friend of mine who's (...) like me. I create these sort of fake scenarios. Again, playing with the whole perception that people have. And I guess, you know I can't say I don't use disability, but I just use it to my, in a very contemporary way, as do most artists.

So, yeah, I created the crowd funding, (...), I got loads of people funding it, who knows why, whether they were paying for the art, who knows whether it was for real or not. It doesn't bother me. And then, what's interesting is that I created this funding, this crowd funding thing that Barbara Lisicki actually sent me a private message on Facebook to clarify if it was real or not. And I thought: done it! If she can't see the irony, or the satire in this piece of work, it just shows.

A: I don't think irony plays a big part in Barbara's make-up.

K: But Allan. And, the weird, I spoke to Tom Shakespeare, okay, in an email exchange, and talked to him about this piece of work, that I wanted it to go out there. And I was using satire. And (..) 'A Modest Proposal'. Okay? Now, even he couldn't, couldn't cope with it. He said to me, the idea is that you put the piece of work out there, so it really does come across totally authentic, that people believe it, the conversation with Tom Shakespeare after he'd (...) To be fair, on disabled people, it would just be too confusing or whatever, I just thought that's him ticked off my book of ever consulting - it's too much, too much. And that is a piece that I use during my performance but I will be turning into a video at some point and the idea *is* to put it out there. I want more people to see it - and believe in it.

I should play it to you actually at some point. (Sings...) 'Every where I go I see you smile, seeing me brings tears to your e-eyes'. And it just goes on, 'I'm wheelchair bound, look at me I'm so withering and, withering and, I dunno withering away. I can't walk, or you could hold my hand.' You know, it just goes on and on, so it's like a real sort of prettyfest, you know, it's a real, like, pretty. (...) 'I'm virtually in pai-ain (it's not really I feel similar to you) You know, I'll never have babies, I'll never be able to sing or dance, you know really going for it big time. To me, somebody introduced me to the 'Modest Proposal' years ago and I, there's different faces of.., to me it's an achievement if people, you've got something out there and people think it's real. That's the difference between being er er,er (..documentarians??) And not being, but doing it in another way. So I think for me that was my first sort of really important, *really* important reference in terms of how I make work, in terms of, not always but I want things to be so deadpan and so coming across as seriously that people don't know how to react or how to respond.

And once you start smiling or joking or oh and then I went to the garage and had my car cleaned, ha-ha. Forget all that. Remove all the laughs and all the sort of trying to tell the story 'and then, guess what happened' acting, you cut the rubbish out and you get it right down to the rawness. It is just (junking)

processes when I'm doing work. How useful that is, I don't know.

A: I think that's interesting.

K: I think you asked me about the Disabled Avant-Garde.

A: The difference between the Disabled Avant-Garde and your own work, yeah.

K: Are you still recording or not?

A: I stopped recording and I've started again.

A: Oh, okay. I think the way to work is, when I'm dealing with somebody else there's always a difference there. And I think that we are, I think the Disabled Avant-Garde, we are, we're generally making the work where we have a commission as opposed to me just churning it out irrespective of a commission.

A: Right.

K: I think the concepts are always strong with Aaron (...) I think that we, for me the good thing about dealing with Aaron is that he's just another person to go through the process with. And that's really energising. And it really helps, that's really good. Because you know that if we fuck it all up it isn't, I think we egg each other on. And that's really helpful. Whereas if I'm doing a piece independently, it is more of a case of, you know you have to be more confident or, because you haven't got somebody else to...

And as far as what I'm saying in the work, do the Disabled Avant-Garde say anything different, I, I don't think it is. I think we're putting it out there, but in different, in just a different way, depending on the commission and what we've been asked to respond to. I think it's still, based on where obviously he comes from a different school of thought, he's a very practised art performance worker, he's very disciplined and he's absolutely, if it involves a dog he will bark like a dog.

And he really will, we're not talking about an actor mimicing a dog, we're talking about Aaron completely immersing his entire self into the dog, oh my God, despite the fact that he cannot hear any more everything. And also he, it's unbelievable. Unbelievable what he does. And I admire the amount of discipline that he has. And I also recognise that it is easier for him to do that because he doesn't have fucking PAs. Or carers, whatever you want to call them. So I think that working with him is really brilliant, but it's also, I mean I totally, yeah I love that, that he doesn't, it's not about acting, and I think there's a very clear distinction between what is acting and what isn't. So if he had to, what ever it took to get into the, the role, he would do without, any, any sort of inhibition.

And that's the sort of person that you, that I want to work with. Don't have an intermission or.. they slow the whole process down. And I really think, I think that I've learnt a lot from him. But at earlier stages, so that now I'm able to just do something without.. (you know (...)) I don't want to be thinking about is this okay for the audience, it's nothing to do with that, that isn't the process. The process of thinking about a piece and get it, presenting it to where you want to, how you want to present it. And not actually taking into consideration the viewer whatsoever other than 'If I do this, will it kill them?' Depending on the (..), depends on the health and safety, all that, all that stuff.

I think absolutely that Aaron and I have never ever had a conversation in which we are talking about how can we change the way in which society sees disability or whatever, it's all about, sometimes we do touch on subject matters where we have to at some point cut the reins as to whether we could be offensive (...) So it has to look (...) respectful, even if it is..

A: At the same time what, sorry?

K: When it comes to disability, we're not trying to, we're not trying

A: D'you need suctioning? (*Calls P.A.*)

K: With a commission, if we have a theme, like a brief, then we can very much sort of (..) off of each other, come up with some very good, good ideas. It's like brainstorming (..) It's very quick, DIY's about speed, it's about doing it very quickly. As opposed to, you know, think about it forever and then making it (..), it's a very quick thing to do. I'm not totally embarrassed that I tend to have artists sort of approaching me and wanting to collaborate with me. Artists with their own art, established artists. So that's very nice. At the moment I'm working with an artist called Marcia Farquhar and she's nothinbg to do with disability arts. And she's somebody who I just formed a good relationship with, she's a performance artist, she's a bit older than me, and we're making a film. I set up performance, I set up a space here for her to, and shot it for her and I'm just making a version of the piece of work that she made a (...) with eggs in a, in a, .. in a, in a she did a performance inside a shop like Heal's actually, or a sort of department store where she's at a bench, sort of (..) table, and she's cracking eggs and talking about them and doing a narrative about them. Talking (..) about them. And then she has two assistants, one is her daughter and one is a friend of her daughter, they're the unspoken assistants, they don't speak, they just peel the eggs. And they're making devilled eggs. And so and then (..) about twenty seconds.

Anyway, Marcia got some arts funding and wanted to work with artists that she's worked for in the past. Each individual that she's with got asked to make a piece of work that she made years ago and do it again, but with my take on it.

A: Right.

K: So I suggested 'Baby Jane'. So she's dressed, dressed up as 'Baby Jane', when I was a resident there, we had a lovely er, it was so awful and so em, anyway, so we got, the story is the 'Baby Jane' story and I still, I'm still (...) the manuscript to edit it. And I haven't got to the editing part yet but, so that's a piece that I've.. It's only the (..) part of stuff that I find exciting and um anyway, that's a new piece, a collaborative, a collaboration where I've been asked to think, (....) Norwich Arts Centre,. So I'm just waiting to hear whether they get funding to

be able to do that.

A: Which arts centre's that?

K: Norwich. Norwich Arts Centre.

A: Oh, Norwich, yeah.

K: I did a Battersea Arts Centre residency recently and I had Ursula Martinez as my mentor. And she's done work, I really liked her, actually. But she comes more from a theatre, she has done performance, she does do performance where she did a piece called 'Hanky-Panky', where she (..)completely strips down to nothing, she also had work shown at the Soho Theatre. I really liked ('Fair?')(.....) DIY, whereas she's, everything's sort of, she knows where everything is, and it's all very much more organised, and structured, and so it's interesting where I think as a mentor as well as (..) Is an artist whose kind of mental health, depression for years, and his stuff was really amazing as well and it was really good to have them understanding my expertise as being encouraging to me to what I do and saying things like, you know, people like you need to do what you do. And I think at any age it's good to get that feedback, particularly from people that wouldn't, they wouldn't know anything about the disability art movement. So yeah, that was good.

And so that made me think about maybe applying for some funding to take the show to the Soho Theatre, you know is it something I could actually do, because, but I think I could, I think I would love to do that. 'The Lights On' and stuff shows there. I think that my way of working could fit in although if you know what I mean I would never fit into that mainstream theatre but could notionally fit in to Soho Theatre. Or Battersea maybe, RichMix, somewhere like that, just do a piece of work that was really demanding for the audience to watch, you know plays around and at the same time does have subversive humour in it like Miracle of Life.

K: Any more questions?

A: Let me see if there's anything I've not done. Don't think so. Are we up to the present?

K: I think the present is about, you know the video with the eggs and about collaborating with people who wanted to collaborate with me as an art partner, disability arts scene. I think people like, a lot of the people in, within the disability art world don't necessarily understand my work or get it, because they come from a fucking theatre background. And so they don't really understand me and they start critiquing it and look on it as a piece of theatre. It isn't a piece of theatre. And so I just sort of lost my head (..) I refuse to get into these sort of (...) Because I/m not in (...) And I'm thinking, you know, I just don't say anything, I just hear what they say and then realise that they don't really understand.

A: You don't want to give people any tips on how to approach your work?

K: Absolutely not.

A: (Roars with laughter.)

K: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. It's not so much that, it's about when they actually try to tell me whether I should do it and maybe you should do this. And that's, that's, that's enough to (...)me. Because I have people in the art world, in the live art scene approaching me, but I don't really have anybody in the disability arts scene approaching me to make work. I did. One person came here once. Dolly Sen.

A: Oh, yes!

K: And also Sian Vasey once. Do you know Sian Vasey?

A: Yes, I know Sian.

K: She wants to make a film about people with S.M.A. And I just couldn't go along with her idea.

A: Oh, of course, she used to be a television producer for Link ot whatever.

K But she has a theatre background. And once you're into the realms of theatre, they insist on a whole different way of things

A: She's got a straight TV background.

K: I couldn't, you know, I did try but it was just, it was too, it was that bit (...question time, you know).

A: I really don't think Sian would get your stuff.

K:

A: Dolly, that might be different.

K: Dolly's moved now.

A: She's in Yarmouth, isn't she?

K Yeah, I like Dolly. Is it Dolly?

A: Dolly, yeah.

K: Yeah, I like Dolly. I think we did form a good relation when she came here. It's not off the cards, it's the circumstances. But I think she would definitely be someone who was enlightening to work with. Sian Vasey was just, she's just too, again what she wanted was some sort of political statement about people with SMA and her idea was just so lame. I don't care, but that's what I thought.

When an idea's so bad, I mean so bad, how the fuck do I change it around? And that comes in, just eradicating it. I think I, and I think there's a lot of people out there in the disability arts movement who are, are very domineering, you don't want to work with them, I couldn't work with them because, you know, to me, making a piece of work that's good involves a conversation in which you can connect to the person. If you don't connect, you can't make a piece of work. Because you're seeing things with a completely different logic. Even though you think the person believes they're on the same fucking wavelength. You can't make work with them. And also people are lazy as well. They wanna make work but actually won't do anything, they don't want to pay for anything. I'm such a bitch aren't I? It's true, though.

A: You're rigorous. About your work. That's no bad thing.

K: I do like making work with people, I just think it has to be, you know that Penny Pepper wanted to, in the past shown an interest but her whole way of doing things is just so different to me that it wouldn't, it just couldn't it wouldn't work unless it was deliberate that her style was part of the, the sort of mechanisms of the piece. That's a very good way of seeing it, don't you think? If it was meant to be be, you know...I think you'd better turn it off now.

(Ends)