

A legendary insomniac, P. J. Proby often threw wild sixteen-hour parties in his Chelsea home where any night of the week you might see a smashed John Lennon throwing up in the toilet while a clutch of pilled up, half dressed aristos writhed on the bed in the next room. P.J. would be slinging back Jack Daniels and firing his .45 revolver into a wildebeest head that hung above him on the wall, egged on by the crazies with whom he shared the house around him. The merry bunch of pranksters included Kim Fowley and Proby's best friend Bongo Wolf, the disabled son of a dentist who would frequently wear porcelain werewolf fangs. Bongo, who can be seen lugging a virgin upstairs in *The Body Beneath*, a hippie horror exploitation movie made in 1972, accompanied PJ on the road and apparently inspired much of PJ's madness, that is before he was kidnapped by his own drug dealer and carted off to America - last heard of somewhere in Louisiana.

It seems Proby may have talked up his sexual prowess, or so suggested his long-term lover Billie Davis who, when she eventually abandoned Proby, choked to the press. The very attractive Davis had been only 18 when she had a top ten hit with *Tell Him* and had been swept off on a tour with the Beatles; the red blooded Beatles had taken bets about who would get to have her first; it isn't recorded which, if any of them won.

About Proby, she told the salivating newspapermen "In the time that we dated he had one erection. It lasted three hours. He was so pleased that he spent the whole night smiling at it. I didn't get a look in". Proby often claimed that he could never be the father of all the

kids that he was so often accused of siring because he had become sterile at the age of seven. Perhaps this could be attributed to the fact that as a child he used to play in a prison electric chair that his grandfather, the prison governor, used to strap him into. "A shame they didn't turn it on", said another ex-wife.

After his Chelsea period, P.J. went to live in Hollywood for a while and was one night drinking in a bar when someone informed him his house had just exploded (the reasons for the explosion are unclear). "I took the pay phone and called my neighbour, Bobby Darin. I said: 'Robert, will you look out and see if my house is still there, please?' He said: 'No, it sure isn't, Jim. Lots of fire engines, but no house.'"

In the crazy stakes, PJ definitely showed the way. He had been variously deported, attacked his secretary with an axe, had been accused of shooting his wife, was declared bankrupt a few times, became a shepherd in the Pennines, died of alcoholic shock (and was resuscitated) and now makes a living performing in clubs around the country whilst he resides on a roundabout near Evesham in Worcestershire. At a historic gig at Fagin's in Manchester in the late 80s he had left the stage after half an hour telling the audience "I'm sorry. I cannot go on. I am suffering from gonorrhoea".

Despite Chrissie and Mick's stormy relationship, the interference of P.J. Proby and Mick's embarrassment that she had taken a job writing a column called *From London With Love* for the American teen magazine *Tiger Beat*, Mick had been happy enough to give Chrissie a little white Austin Mini as a coming-back-from-tour

present. Later in the year Brian Jones bought a Rolls Royce with its dancing-with-the-devil number plate DD 666.

Mick had thrown a party just after Christmas and John, George and Ringo had come round which had certainly impressed the other guests especially Robert Fraser the art gallery owner with whom Mick had become friends. Having one Beatle at your party was truly special, a mark that you were really at the centre of something - one of the in-crowd - but having three of the four of them there was exceptional. It put Jagger into the epicentre. He wasn't just one of the in-crowd now, he was one of the leaders of the pack.

To get to Mick's party, Ringo hadn't had to travel far because he and his 19 year old girlfriend Maureen Cox, (they had been together since the Cavern days), had just moved in around the corner at 34 Montagu Square right by a bright red post box. (Later in the year he would be photographed on the doorstep with his newborn son Zak). Ringo and Maureen could have easily walked back home from the party in three minutes but instead he chose to drive home in his exotic new Italian Facel Vega having only just passed his test at the age of 25. Ringo proudly admitted to the press that he could afford the car but he couldn't spell it.

The other Beatles and their manager were also acquiring or had acquired new cars, as well as buying uptown addresses, partly because Brian Epstein had gone into partnership with a car dealers out in Hounslow, which he used as a cheap way of keeping his fleet up to date and as a source of cash at a time when his gambling debts were running at £5,000 a week and he was too embarrassed to admit the

losses to his own office. Epstein acquired a silver Bentley convertible and a black Mini Cooper to go with his red Rolls Royce. George had changed his E-Type Jaguar for a white Maserati, which he quickly became bored with and returned to the garage with only 4,000 miles on the clock. He drove home in an Aston Martin like Paul's. John who had great difficulty learning to drive acquired a Rolls Royce, a Ferrari and a Mini Minor; the Ferrari was returned with only 1,000 miles on it.

When he saw McCartney's beautiful Aston, Mick immediately extracted some money from Eric Easton and went round to the Aston Martin showroom. The salesman looked shocked at the longhaired louche young man examining his classic cars. It finally clicked with him who Mick was after a couple of double takes, which was OK because then he became suitably obsequious and started laying on the royal tour, lathering on the soft soap.

Would Mr. Jagger like a cup of tea? Look at this fine walnut dashboard, all hand-made you know and how about a cigarette? But all the time Mick could see him thinking, 'has this Rolling Stone really got enough money for this expensive machine?' When McCartney bought his Aston, the salesman had probably let Paul pay with a cheque, smiling and wringing his hands like Uriah Heep, almost bowing as he accepted it and blowing the ink dry saying,



‘Although we usually insist on a banker’s draft sir, it won’t be necessary in your case’. But you could tell he didn’t really want to take any cheques from Mr. Jagger... not yet, not until Mr. Jagger had safely had another couple of hits under his belt. Oh no, being a Rolling Stone isn’t the same as being a *Beatle* after all. Mick gritted his teeth and selected a £25,000 midnight blue Aston Martin DB6 with electric windows, a radio and even a record player, spending more than he meant to. That’ll show the bastard. A few months later he crashed it with Chrissie in it. He hit a Ford Anglia belonging to the Countess of Carlisle down the road from his new flat in the

Marylebone Road (which says something about the way the roles were reversing in 60s Britain; the arriviste pop star had a fabulous blue Aston while the blueblood could only manage a little Ford). It was only a scrape that would cost Jagger £121 and no one was hurt but there was still a row about it.

Peter Whitehead's in town and he's talking to Andrew about filming the band on tour in Ireland. They all liked the way he'd filmed that big poetry thing at the Albert Hall – *Wholly Communion*. Mick had thought the poetry evening looked like a load of old crap but went anyway, just to be seen - Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and all the other so-called 'Beat Poets', taking themselves too seriously and spouting on for hours, although Ginsberg's *Howl* with all its allusions to the degradation of alcohol and drug taking was seriously not before bedtime stuff. But just because a bloke writes a poem, that doesn't mean to say he's the best person to recite it does it? Stones songs exempted of course.

He thought the best bit of the poetry evening had been when those Germans did a poem that consisted entirely of sneezing. That really was hilarious but the other stuff? You could keep it. Yet Whitehead had made a good job of the film, using portable cameras, keeping on the move, making it lively.

Andrew had been agonising about the problem of making a Stones film. The Beatles' *Hard Days Night* had been a tour de force but how to follow a film like that? How could he beat them at their own game? The thing about the Beatles is that they were naturally funny. All you

had to do was stick them in front of a camera and say be funny and they would. The Stones just weren't funny. Bill and Charlie were taciturn to the point of being mute – which was a blessing really, and certainly the glory-seeker Brian couldn't be trusted to start spouting off to the cameras. He'd start thinking he was the spokesman for the band again. Jagger and Keith spoke very little to each other for long periods unless they were trying to write something. It was one of the mechanisms they used to avoid arguing with each other; don't speak at all. They maintained their relationship this way, by not talking about it. Anyway they had Andrew as a go-between in their great, unrequited love affair. That aside, zany, droll, dry, acerbic, fast-paced badinage just wasn't their bag, man, and Andrew knew it.

Mick didn't know what Andrew was after when he hired Peter Whitehead to follow them around on tour. The gigs were OK but off stage there was little conversation. In fact there were excruciatingly long silences between the band members. It was all a bit boring. And then there was the marijuana smoking and girl chasing. You couldn't show any of that – especially to their wives and girlfriends. The film would be instantly banned, their relationships ruined and their reputations, already blackened by the press, could be utterly destroyed.