

THE MANUAL

'The Manual: How To Have A Number One The Easy Way' does what it says on the label. Follow to the letter the instructions herein, and you will have a number one hit ... The Manual's business-fascistic, stupid-clever approach to scoring a number one hit [is] even more on the money now.' The Face

'The Manual is a gripping mix of PR, financial tomfoolery, technical knowledge and sheer front ... it's still a must-have for anyone who sees themselves in the dressing room next to Billie at the Top of the Pops studio six months from now.' sleazeration

This is an unexpurgated reissue of the rare and long-out-of-print 'how-to' book first published in 1988 by Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond, a.k.a. The Timelords (a.k.a. The KLF, a.k.a. The Justified Ancients of MuMu, etc). In it they reveal their 'Zenarchistic method used in making the unthinkable happen', a day-by-day, step-by-step guide for anyone who wants to have a number-one single in the official UK charts - no previous musical experience necessary.

The Manual is also an unparalleled exposé of the reality behind the pop-music business and, while names may have changed since its first issue, the mechanics of financing, producing and promoting a hit set out here remain absolutely relevant.

This edition includes a new introduction by Jon Savage and an afterword by Bill Drummond.

ISBN 1-899858-65



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CAUTY DRUMMOND

THE MANUAL

[HOW TO HAVE A NUMBER ONE]

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1998

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THE MANUAL

(HOW TO HAVE A NUMBER ONE THE EASY WAY)

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JIMMY CAUTY BILL DRUMMOND



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(HOW TO HAVE A NUMBER ONE THE EASY WAY)

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First published 1988 by
KLF Publications

This edition first published 1998 by
●●●ellipsis
Second impression 1999

© 1988, 1998 KLF Publications
© 1998 Jon Savage, pages 7 to 9

British Library Cataloguing in Publication
A CIP record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBN 1 899858 65 2

Printed in Great Britain by
Newham Newark & Chambers, London

●●●ellipsis is a registered trade mark of
ELLIPSIS LONDON LIMITED
2 Rufus Street, London N1 6PE
www.ellipsis.com

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PLANNING AN ACCIDENT

A pop manual might seem like a contradiction in terms, but that's the way Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond like it, and I have to say I agree. Much of the organised music industry – from those fitful multinationals down to their handmaidens in the broadsheets and the music weeklies – is happy to offer mystification (all those adjectives) rather than information, with the result that most musicians are happy to buy into a cosmic vagueness when talking about what they do. It's an often endearing, but rarely illuminating discourse.

It's common to think that contradictions, freely expressed, denote insincerity. Far from it: commodity capitalism, or, as J K Galbraith would prefer, 'the market system', thrives on contradictions – the illusory resolution of which in fact operates as a system of control. (Think of all the problems caused for those rich people who vote Labour.) But the whole point about contradictions is that they are, to paraphrase John Lydon, 'a nenergy': oscillating between personality poles – between idealism and greed, between altruism and self-interest, between art and commerce – you can pick up speed, you can make yourself faster and smarter than the suits.

The biggest contradiction in late-period pop may well lie

between calculation and intuition, between knowledge and the deepest innocence. Cauty and Drummond passed through their twenties during a highly self-conscious, theoretical moment, Punk Rock: they know stuff which you can't unlearn without being pathetic – as the punk fanzine *Datsun* put it, oh I'm sorry that I read, that I have an education, that I know stuff – but are still in love with the big beat, the primal, earthy simplicity of incandescant pop flashes like 2 Unlimited's 'No Limits'. Such moments defy rational explanation, but it doesn't stop people trying: after all, it's fun.

Regard *The Manual* as a companion piece to Chris Brook and Gimpo's excellent account of how Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond burned one million pounds of KLF money on the island of Jura: *K Foundation Burn A Million Quid* (ellipsis london, 1997). You do something that you feel is right, or which chooses you, which may seem extraordinary to most people, including yourself, but you have to do it. Then you try to rationalise what was not necessarily a planned or even rational act, as if to discover why it might have been that you ever did such a thing. It's a good way of integrating intention and intuition, those qualities that patriarchal tradition would have you believe irreconcilable. And it prolongs the life of an idea.

Most of all, it's pop. Pop doesn't demand either/or but flatly states, 'I'll have the lot. Contradictions? I eat 'em up and spew 'em out'. In both these books, Cauty and Drummond are never far away from their own mysticism: a sense of awe at the random power of chart music. There is also an endearing sense of paradoxical amazement: did we do this? Well of course, we engineered it. Mmm, we didn't

actually, how could we? 'Doctorin' The Tardis' was a planned accident that this book attempts to turn into a system. Well, why not? Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond describe here a whole cartography of pop, one essence of which is that you have nothing to lose but your self-imposed chains.

Jon Savage, 1998

1988 (YOU KNOW WHAT'S GONE)

THE MANUAL

(HOW TO HAVE A NUMBER ONE THE EASY WAY)

TEXT BY:-

LORD ROCK AND TIME BOY

A.K.A. THE TIMELORDS

A.K.A. ROCKMAN ROCK AND KINGBOY D.

A.K.A. THE JUSTIFIED ANCIENTS OF MU MU

A.K.A. THE JAMS

A.K.A. THE XLF

A.K.A. THE FALL

A.K.A. THE FOREVER ANCIENTS LIBERATION LOOPHOLE



GUARANTEE — HOW TO OBTAIN IT

WE GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL REFUND THE COMPLETE PRICE OF THIS MANUAL IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ACHIEVE A NUMBER ONE SINGLE IN THE OFFICIAL (GALLUP) UK CHARTS WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF THE PURCHASE OF THIS MANUAL AND ON CONDITION THAT YOU HAVE FULFILLED OUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER. TO RECEIVE THIS GUARANTEE PLEASE WRITE TO KLF PUBLICATIONS, BOX 283, HP21 7TP, UK WITH YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND A PHOTOCOPY OF YOUR PURCHASE RECEIPT AND AN S.A.E. YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR GUARANTEE WITHIN TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DON LUCKNOW

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK MARIE O'FLAHERTY FOR HER DEDICATION AND HARD WORK ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY AND WITHOUT WHOM WE WOULD NOT HAVE COMPLETED THIS MANUAL.

THE BEGINNING

'HOW TO HAVE A NUMBER ONE - THE EASY WAY'

Be ready to ride the big dipper of the mixed metaphor. Be ready to dip your hands in the lucky bag of life, gather the storm clouds of fantasy and anoint your own genius. Because it is only by following the clear and concise instructions contained in this book that you can realise your childish fantasies of having a Number One hit single in the official UK Top 40 thus guaranteeing you a place forever in the sacred annals of Pop History.

Other than achieving a Number One hit single we offer you nothing. There will be no endless wealth. Fame will flicker and fade and sex will still be a problem. What was once yours for a few days will now enter the public domain.

In parts of this manual we will patronise you. In others we will cheat you. We will lie to you but we will lie to ourselves as well. You will, however, see through our lies and grasp the shining truth within. We will trap ourselves in our own pretensions. Our insights will be shot through with distort rays and we will revel in our own inconsistencies. If parts get too boring just fast forward - all the way to the end if need be.

Now, we all know that pop music is not going to save the world but it does, undeniably, create a filing system for

the memory banks. In years to come people will stagger home down lonely streets singing your song to the strains of regurgitated vinaloo, all memory of who was behind the song lost. It is you, though, who will be responsible for bringing back those lost tastes, smells, tears, pangs, forgotten years and missed chances. So enjoy what you can while at Number One.

People equate a Number One with fame, endless wealth and easy sex - a myth that they want to believe and one that the popular press want to see continued. Along with the soap stars, sporting heroes and selected (however distant) members of the Royal Family, pop stars belong to a glittering world of showbiz parties at one end of the scale, to illicit liaisons at the other, where their lives are dragged up, dressed up, made up and ultimately destroyed. The celebrated, of course, are apt to fall into a world of drugs, drink, broken marriages and bankruptcy, but even this is given the glamour treatment instead of the squalid misery that it is in reality.

Basically, a Number One is seen as the ultimate accolade in pop music. Winning the Gold Medal. The crowning glory.

The majority of Number Ones are achieved early on in the artist's public career, before they have been able to establish reputations and build a solid fan base. Most artists are never able to recover from having one and it becomes the millstone around their necks to which all subsequent releases are compared. The fact that a record is Number One automatically means the track is in a very short period of time going to become over-exposed and as worthless as last month's catch-phrase.

Once or twice a decade an act will burst through with a Number One that hits a national nerve, and the public's

appetite for the sound and packaging will not be satisfied with the one record. The formula will be untempered with and the success will be repeated a second, a third and sometimes even a fourth time. The prison is then complete; either the artists will be destroyed in their attempt to prove to the world that there are other facets to their creativity or they succumb willingly and spend the rest of their lives as a travelling freak show, peddling a nostalgia for those now far off, carefree days. These are the lucky few. Most never have the chance of a repeat performance and slide ungracefully into years of unpaid tax, desperately delaying all attempts to come to terms with the only rational thing to do – get a nine to five job.

Even if the unsuspecting artiste doesn't know the above, rest assured most of the record business does but for some lemming-like reason refuses to acknowledge it. They continue to view the act's cheaply recorded debut blockbuster as striking gold and will spend the next few years pumping fortunes into studio time, video budgets and tour support, whilst praying for a repeat of the miracle and the volume album sales that bring in the real money.

Of course there are those artists that have worked long and hard building personal artistic confidence, critical acclaim, a loyal following (all strong foundations), and then have a Number One – that is that crowning glory. But even then the disgruntled purists amongst the loyal following desert in disgust at having to share their private club with the unwashed masses.

So what's left? What's the point? What can be achieved when no great financial rewards or long-term career prospects allowing for creative freedom can be hoped for, let alone guaranteed? We don't know.

If this book succeeds in becoming Bert Weedon's 'Play In A Day' for some lost month in the late eighties we will be happy. If anybody actually gets a Number One by following our instructions we promise them a night out with The JAMS in Madagascar. We will arrange everything. For those that might be offended please read all 'hes', 'hims' and 'his' as 'shes', 'hers' and 'hers'. Being blokes it was easier writing it the way we did.

So how do you go about achieving a UK Number One? Follow this simple step by step guide:

Firstly, you must be skint and on the dole. Anybody with a proper job or tied up with full time education will not have the time to devote to see it through. Also, being on the dole gives you a clearer perspective on how much of society is run. If you are already a musician stop playing your instrument. Even better, sell the junk. It will become clearer later on but just take our word for it for the time being. Sitting around tinkering with the Portastudio or musical gear (either ancient or modern) just complicates and distracts you from the main objective. Even worse than being a musician is being a musician in a band. Real bands never get to Number One – unless they are puppets.

If you are in a band you will undoubtedly be aware of the petty squabbles and bitching that develop within them. This only festers and grows proportionately as the band gets bigger, and no band ever grows out of it. All bands end in tantrums, tears and bitter acrimony. The myth of a band being a gang of lads out 'against' the world (read as 'to change', 'to shag' or 'to save' the world) is pure wishful thinking to keep us all buying the records and reading the journals. Mind you, it's a myth that many band members want to believe themselves.

So if in a band, quit. Get out. Now.

That said, it can be very helpful to have a partner, someone who you can bounce ideas off and vice versa. Any more than two of you and factions develop and you may as well be in politics. There is no place for the nostalgia of the four lads who shook the world or the last gang in town.

Watch Top of the Pops religiously every week and learn from it. When the time comes it is through TOTP that you will convince the largest cross-section of the British public to go out and buy your record. Remember, Top of the Pops is all-powerful and has outlasted all the greats (Cliff being the exception to the rule). Taking the angst ridden, 'I'm above all this!' outsider stance only gets you so far and even then takes sodding years and ends up with you alienating vast chunks of the Great British public who don't want to be confronted with Jim Reid's skin problem on a Thursday evening. I repeat, take Top of the Pops to your bosom and learn to love the platform that matters the most.

YOU CAN BEGIN ANY SUNDAY EVENING

You can begin any Sunday evening by listening to Bruno Brookes introducing the Top 40 Show between 4pm and 7pm. You don't have to sit down and dissect and study it, just have it on and make the tea. After that do whatever you do on a Sunday evening but before you go to sleep that night you are going to have to come up with a name for your record company. Nothing too clever or inspired. Something that sounds solid. You just want something that's not going to be offensive and people are going to be happy doing business with.

Monday morning. Check that the company name that you have chosen is still sound. Be up, dressed and out by 9am. You are going to have to get used to getting up earlier; no lying in until noon now. From now on every time you telephone someone on business remember to give them your name and the company you are from (even though it's only you). Don't bother getting headed note paper. People waste a lot of time, effort and money having stationery produced when getting a new business off the ground. People in the late eighties can see through the smart graphics.

Spend the remainder of the morning amassing the rest of the tools you will need for the job in hand. These are:

1. A record player (the crappier the better as long as it actually works). Mass appeal records can always transcend any apparatus they are played on; the expensive set up is only for judging coffee table records.
2. Copies of the latest in the series of 'Now That's What I Call Music' and 'Hits' LPs.
3. A couple of the most recent dance compilation LPs ('The Techno Sounds of Dagenham Volume VI', etc.).
4. All the 7-inch singles in your house that ever made the Top 5. (If there are any other records you want to add to the pile make sure there is a very good reason why they should be there and make sure they were never released as indie records or had any punky associations.)
5. A copy of the latest edition of *The Guinness Book of British Hit Singles*.
6. A copy of the *Music Week Directory*. This you will have to send off for. Address your envelope to: Sylvia Calver, Morgan Grampian plc, Royal Sovereign House, 40 Beresford Street, London SE18 6BQ (telephone 01-854 2200) with a cheque or postal order for £15.00. It will take about ten days to get to you.
7. A hardback notebook and a fine point, black ball Pentel.

If you do not already have any of the above, and are unable to borrow them, then we are afraid you are going to have to spend some real cash. Hopefully, this will be the last time in the whole project that you will have to use up some of your Giro, other than the odd bus fare and phone call.

If you have a telephone where you live and it hasn't been disconnected yet, great. If not, buy a phone card, the more expensive the better. Using coin operated telephones is crap for the obvious reasons: there are usually queues, they are often vandalised and the money runs out, thus making you look like an inefficient dick head and not a future Number One. Another useful phone hint: never leave somebody else's flat, house or office without first having made and received at least one call, thus spreading your overheads on to some of the people who will enjoy basking in the reflected glory once you are at Number One.

If you have all that done and it's not yet one o'clock, start listening to the 'Hits' and 'Now' compilation LPs from end to end. Of course, your conditioned brain will tell you it's all a pile of shite and pales into insignificance compared to the Golden Era in Pop, when you were on the cusp of your adolescent years. Dig deeper into your heart and you will know that you are just lying to yourself. All eras in pop music are golden ages, or will be looked upon as such by the only generation that matters at any given time. Not only are all ages in chart pop equal, chart pop never changes, it only appears to change on its surface level.

Unwrap pop's layers and what we are left with is the same old plate of meat and two veg that have kept generations of pop pickers well satisfied. The emotional appetite that chart pop satisfies is constant. The hunger is forever. What does change is the technology – this is always on the march. At some point in the future science will develop a commodity that will satisfy this emotional need in a more efficient way. There was a period in our own prehistory when Top Tens and Number Ones didn't exist, when tea

time on Sunday wasn't synonymous with the brand new chart run-down. For the time being we have our Top Tens and Number Ones, and while science marches to the beat that will finally destroy it all, it also comes up with the goods that will satisfy our other endless appetite, that of apparent change. All records in the Top Ten (especially those that get to Number One) have far more in common with each other than with whatever genre they have developed from or sprung out of.

The 'cool cats' and hipsters of the early sixties might have thought modern jazz was going to finally break through when 'Take Five' made the Hit Parade. The blue-rinse brigade feared the downfall of decent society when The Pistols made Number One with 'God Save The Queen', and the musos predicted real music was about to die because of the 1988 rash of DJ records. Had you played some free jazz to ninety-five per cent of the people who had made 'Take Five' a smash, they would have run for cover behind the latest release by Pat Boone. The Pistols might have been swearing on TV, inciting a generation of kids to 'Get pissed! Destroy!' but if 'God Save The Queen' had not stuck rigidly to The Golden Rules [THESE WILL BE EXPLAINED LATER], The Pistols would never have seen the inside of the Top Ten.

In certain clubs across our nation in 1988, DJs were playing the latest 12-inch acid tracks to packed houses of the drugged and delirious. If any of these DJs had any ambitions of following in the paths of Tim Simenon and Mark Moore to the top of the charts they have to acknowledge the fact that what they have learned out there behind their Technics can only provide them with the fashionable icing when it comes to the real action inside

the Top Ten and the battle for the Number One slot is on. They must also follow The Golden Rules.

In our lifetime Great Britain has been pretty good at coming up with or reinterpreting a constant flow of entertaining subcults that young people can either lose or find themselves in. With most of these subcults comes some kind of music. Our cult-hungry media grabs whatever it is and splatters it all over the place. Whatever music makers follow in its wake are bid for by the more desperate sections of the music industry. Once signed, a process will begin in an attempt to transform whatever noise that was made by the ensembles into something that will fit The Golden Rules of chart pop. The process involves plenty of trial and error and huge sums of never-seen cash.

So, if one of these ensembles find themselves in the higher regions of the charts and their sights are set on the Top Spot, their fellow subcult members interpret this as the Walls of Jericho finally crumbling, or at the very least, their boys working as moles from the inside. All that in actual fact has happened is, unwittingly or not, the Golden Rules have been adhered to and the nouvelle subcult has attained maximum media exposure. Although the latest subculture might be useful to give each potential chart record its attitude gloss, it must be remembered that this particular attitude might put as many people off the otherwise perfectly acceptable pop record as be attracted to it. Another useful hint when it comes to subcult attitude gloss: it often helps not to be purists. Water it down. Sugar it up. Some of the above Tony James understood. Some he most definitely did not.

Of course, there is another argument: 'demands are created and appetites stimulated. Pop music is the worst

example of this. There are wicked music moguls cynically manipulating the hearts and minds of young teenagers so as to get them to part with their pocket money.' This is a worthless argument pursued by those unlucky ones who have never really been moved by the glories of pop music. They may as well have never been teenagers.

THE RECORDING STUDIO

DON'T BE TEMPTED TO SKIP THIS SECTION ON STUDIOS. IT MUST BE READ OVER LUNCH — BEFORE BOOKING YOUR STUDIO.

The recording studio is the place where you will record your Number One hit single. There are hundreds of recording studios scattered across the country, from the north of Scotland to deepest Cornwall.

THE STUDIO OWNER

The majority of studios are privately owned by someone who is actively involved in the running of the place on a daily basis. Very few are owned by the major record companies. These owners are usually very enthusiastic and encouraging types who have a long, broad and deep love of all things musical; often they have been musicians themselves but have decided to knock their days on the road on the head and get into what they hoped would be the more lucrative and stable business of owning a studio. Unfortunately for them, this is usually not the case and they will have to spend the rest of their lives seriously in debt.

The studio owner will often have a very realistic and pragmatic view of the musical business. He will have been through the mill, ridden the rough ride, seen spotty oiks come into his studio hardly able to roll their own and within what seems a matter of months become internationally renowned and respected musicians whose opin-

ions are eagerly sought on anything from the destruction of the Amazon rain forests to the continued subsidy of the local bus service, whilst developing an unhealthy appetite for cocaine.

A fact that is continually on the studio owner's mind is that there are far more studios flogging studio time than there are clients willing to pay for it. This creates a desperate competition between studios to encourage YOU the client to use them. One outcome of this competition is for the studios to continually get themselves as far into hock as their banks will let them go, enabling them to invest in the latest recording studio hardware. This hardware they hope will act as the bait to get YOU the client to book the studio. It also fulfils a secondary role, that of keeping the studio's cage, young upwardly mobile engineer loyal to the studio and prevent him defecting to a better equipped rival. We will go further into the intriguing subject of the recording studio engineer later on in this book.

THE STUDIO MANAGER

The studio manager (as opposed to the studio owner) is the person who looks after all aspects of the smooth and efficient running of the studio. In smaller studios this is often the owner or he has a personal assistant (PA) who handles most of the job for him. In large studios these are usually a breed of highly efficient women whose matriarchal presence can be felt in all areas and at all times.

ENGINEERS

There will also be a small posse of recording studio engineers on call, from the tea boy who started last Monday and hasn't been sacked yet, to the senior engineer. All engi-

neers start life as tea boys and are officially called 'tape ops' (the person who switches the tape recorders on and off). To put it simply, the recording studio engineer's job is to put the noise that musicians create on tape. Large studios will have a maintenance engineer. If any malfunction occurs with the studio hardware it is his job to get it working again – fast. Smaller studios usually have one on call.

THE STUDIO

Studios are in the most unlikely of buildings and the most unlikely of settings. Although all studios want to attract as much business as possible, they do not want to advertise their presence to local thugs who might fancy breaking in and getting their hands on a few thousand pounds worth of gear.

The simplest classification given to studios is the number of tracks their tape machines have. There can be either four, eight, sixteen, twenty-four, thirty-two or forty-eight track studios. Four, eight and sixteen track are only used for making demos these days and demos are a thing of the past. You will find engineers everywhere trying to impress you with the fact that 'Sergeant Pepper' was recorded on a four track. This of course is as relevant as the fact that no jcb's were used in the construction of the Great Pyramid.

A twenty-four track is what you will need for the initial recording, thirty-two tracks are still pretty rare. Forty-eight tracks are where two twenty-four track machines are synchronised together. You might need one of these when it comes to the final mixing stages of your future Number One.

A twenty-four track means that your engineer will be working with a multi-track tape recorder that has twenty-

four separate tracks on which he can have twenty-four individual sounds recorded at any one time. At the mixing stage these twenty-four separate sounds will be simultaneously channelled through the mixing desk where all these separate sounds are tampered with and (hopefully) enhanced before being channelled out again and recorded for posterity by a two track (stereo) tape machine. This is THE MASTER TAPE.

The other common way that recording studios are classified is whether the desk is computer-assisted or not. For the initial recording you will only need a manually operated desk. A computer-assisted desk is used when the recording reaches the mixing stage and the engineer is having to juggle with a minimum of twenty-four tracks simultaneously. The computer will assist by giving the engineer at least an extra twenty-two hands and twenty-four perfect memories – an obvious added bonus in these techno days.

SSL (Solid State Logic) is still the most common make of computer-assisted desk and still the only one to insist on. But all that could change in the fast moving world of studio hardware. From now on, we will refer to all computer desks as SSL (it's a bit of a Hoover/Sellotape situation).

A traditional recording studio comprises: THE CONTROL ROOM which houses the mixing desk, tape machines, outboard gear, engineers and producers and THE RECORDING ROOM, full of all sorts of strange things to either deaden the live sound or liven the dead sound. This is where the traditional musician performs. There will also be a recreation room with a television, pool table and computer games to keep musicians amused whilst the traditional producer casts his spells without being hindered by the traditional musicians' paranoid presence.

In your case all the action will be taking place in the control room. The above scenario is almost quaint, but more of all that later in the 'Five Days In A Twenty-Four Track Studio' chapter.

Many of the more successful studios have expanded their complexes so as to contain more than one studio. They might have a number of studios offering a range of services, from four track to forty-eight track, ssl and manual and, more than likely nowadays, a programming suite replacing the need for a four/eight/sixteen track demo studio.

The way that recording studios base their rates (what they want you to pay them) can vary from studio to studio. The standard quoted by each studio is their hourly rate; for twenty-four track this can range from £20 per hour to £150 per hour.

If it were only that simple. The studio manager's only way of proving his worth to the world is by transforming all the great tracts of space on his wall chart calendar pinned to the board above his desk into something that is crammed with blue, yellow, red and green little bits of sticky back paper, each signifying another session booked. (Studio managers will hike round a last year's crowded wall chart calendar as a cv when looking for a new job.) This is all good news for you. That studio manager will be willing to offer you all sorts of favourable deals just to prevent a day slipping by without the corresponding box on the calendar not having a coloured sticker on it. Deals can be based on:

1. INTRODUCTORY OFFER. This will be an obvious one for you.

2. **DOWN TIME.** This is usually the time between when the official client finishes (usually 2am) and starts again (usually 10am).
3. **BLOCK BOOKING.** This would only happen if a client wanted a month or more to record an LP.
4. **CANCELLATION TIME.** This is when a client has cancelled studio time at the very last minute and the studio is desperate to sell it off.
5. **REGULAR CUSTOMER RATE.** Not applicable to you but just for reference. By the time you use the same studio for the third time you should be trying to pull this one.
6. **LOCK OUT.** This is when, although you may be working in a studio for ten hours a day, the studio cannot sell off the remaining fourteen hours as down time to another client. Most lock out deals are based on them being the equivalent of twelve hours. So, if you were to work for a sixteen hour stretch you would be getting yourself four free hours.

The more expensive the hourly rate a studio charges the better equipped and flash it will be. You won't need an expensive studio. Expensive studios are for major record companies to put their major (or would-be major) artists in, where they can spend as long as it takes to make their international-sounding master-work, while the decor and amenities of the place neither challenges their ego or standing in the market place. These establishments and the engineers who work in them are only ever interested in the LP that costs at least £150,000 to make, not a cheeky little record like yours that's going to surprise everybody by getting to Number One. What you want is the moderately priced studio whose gear is intact and where all concerned

are as hungry and enthusiastic as you are to prove that they can do it.

Although a Number One single cannot sound like an indie trash record, they do not have to sound like they have cost a million to make, unlike a Number One LP.

MONDAY AFTERNOON (BOOK THE STUDIO NOW)

You are going to need to book five consecutive days lock out in a manually operated (non SSL) desk, twenty-four track studio hopefully starting from the following Monday. Your local studios can be tracked down in the Yellow Pages under the 'Recording Services/Sound' heading. It should be apparent from the way they list themselves whether they are twenty-four track or not. If by chance there are none in your area, get straight down to the local reference library where they will have Yellow Pages covering the whole country. Check the neighbouring regions for studios and get some names down in your notebook. If the studio you end up using is further than you can travel to on a daily basis, this will be no problem; all studios are only too willing to organise accommodation as part of the overall deal.

Before you start dialling make a few notes:

1. Pay no more than £40 per hour (exclusive of VAT) for the basic rates.
2. Ensure it includes fees for the best available engineer.
3. Be aware that you will also be charged for the tape you use and extra gear that is hired in specially for your session. Remember to get the rates for these.

If you smoke, it's time to light up, then pick up the telephone and dial. Ask for the studio manager. Just remember, the studio manager is going to be out to impress you the potential client. They won't be thinking: 'Who's this dickhead calling up who doesn't know what they're talking about?' They will be too worried that you are thinking they are the total dickhead and on that basis will book a rival studio. Give him your name and the company you are from, and with the information we have already given you start doing your first deal.

First checking to see they have the facilities you require, the studio will then try to flog you down time or odd days here and there. Hold firm. You have got to have five clear consecutive days and you want to start the following Monday with their best in-house engineer. If they have not got, or are unable to shift any of their other clients to fit you in, tell them you will have to look elsewhere. They will be getting nervous now, as they might be just about to lose anything from £1000 to £100,000 worth of business. So, when he says they do have the five consecutive days but not starting until the tenth (or whatever date they quote) tell him to pencil it in ('pencil' means provisionally booked) and you will get back to him in a couple of days to let him know either way. It might be worth having a bit of a chat with him about what other clients they have had in lately. Ask if they have had any hits come out of the studio, that sort of thing. This helps you build up a bit of a vibe where the studio's at. Then call the next studio on your list and repeat the process.

Once you have got through your list of studios in your local(ish) area, go and put the kettle on, take a leak and make yourself a cup of tea (coffee if you have to), as the

next move you have to make has no simple ABC answer.

Between you sipping this cup of tea and getting to Number One you are going to be involved with a lot of people along the way, and from all these people you can learn a lot. Whether they are just a tea boy or an international super star you bump into down at TV Centre while doing Top of the Pops, everybody involved in this music game has some sort of insight or angle on it all. Listen to what they all have to say but take nothing as gospel; you are going to have to start building up your own picture of how it all moves.

When you do meet people that have had some sort of success it will be natural for you to feel impressed and give a lot more credence to what they have to say, rather than to what the tea boy says. Just remember that they in reality will have very little genuine idea of how they arrived at their success or what they should be doing next in their career to prevent it from crashing to the ground. Under what might seem their confident exterior will be lurking a severe paranoia that they will be found out for what they are, a charlatan with a series of lucky breaks. With all these people you meet you must make them feel involved and that you respect their opinion and help. Everybody likes to feel part of a success, and you must let them feel that. In doing this we are not trying to encourage you into becoming an obsequious slimy toad, but to make you aware that the enthusiasm and goodwill of all these people is vital to the success of your project. They deserve your respect.

At times you will be told things, given advice that goes against the grain of the way you have already been thinking. Your gut reaction might be 'Sod that! I know what I'm

doing!' So before blurting out your condemnation of their ideas, let it filter through you; don't try and over rationalise or look for the logical answer. Let it simmer for a bit and then go with your now more balanced gut reaction.

Don't hide behind any naive 'no compromise' shields: the only thing you must not compromise on is your final goal – that Olympian slot on Top of the Pops.

Only you can make each decision along the way. Don't look for others to make them for you. If something goes wrong remember you are the only one who is ultimately responsible.

When you have drunk your tea and had a look out of the window (just to check the world is still there) you are going to have to decide which of the possible studios you are going to commit to. That decision should not just be based on the studio that can offer you the five consecutive days the earliest and at the best rate. All that should be balanced with something in the tone of the studio manager's voice. The one that sounds understanding. The one that you feel could be on YOUR side. Then make your telephone call and confirm your booking.

If it is now after 3pm and you have your studio booked, switch on Radio One and listen to 'Steve Wright In The Afternoon'. Viewed from a certain angle the man is a genius. Find that angle and view. He is the most popular DJ in the country. He has been the heartbeat of the British psyche since 1985. You don't even have to like him to be awed by him.

This above paragraph is not an attempt at obvious irony, it is for real. If you can't find that angle, then I am afraid you have wasted your money in buying this manual.

Spend the rest of the afternoon doing whatever you do

that gets your mind rolling: a bus ride into town, a stride across the moors, a burn-up on the freeway, two hours on the Circle Line (whatever it is), and let your mind ponder on two topics: MONEY and A GROUP NAME.

There will be a group name that will be the obvious one for you. Nothing too long-winded or desperately clever, but at the same time one that is just right for the times we live in. Don't try too hard, just let it float up. The other topic, MONEY, we have dedicated the next chapter to.

MONEY

Money is a very strange concept. There will be points in the forthcoming months when you might not have the change in your pockets to get the bus into town, at the same time as you are talking to people on the telephone in terms of tens of thousands of pounds. Some of the following might seem contradictory, but in matters of money things often are. We spoke earlier of how being on the dole gives you a clearer vision of how society works. What it doesn't do is give you a clear idea of how money works.

After you spend any time on the dole, you either resign yourself to the economic level your life is at and cope – or things start to slide. The rent gets into arrears. The electricity goes unpaid. The gas board threatens to cut you off. When this starts happening, a paranoia begins creeping in telling you modern society is geared to working against the individual and you in particular. The late eighties reaction to this is invariably to realise that the only way out is for you to become suddenly very rich and none of this will matter any more. You will start to fantasise about becoming very wealthy and how very shortly it will happen to you. You only have to make the smart move, find the right key, make the right contact, be discovered for what you are. Your fantasy will be fuelled by everything.

Nobody wins the pools. There is no such thing as a fast buck. Nobody gets rich quick. El Dorado will never be found. Wealth is a slow build, an attitude to life. I'm afraid the old adage that if you look after the pennies the pounds will look after themselves is always true. That said, you must be willing to risk everything – that's everything you haven't got as well as you have got – or nothing will happen.

The reason we say all that stuff above about 'there is no such thing as a fast buck' is because we are bombarded with information about eternally adolescent pop stars who have just done deals worth 'this much' or have just grossed 'that much' on their last US tour. Firstly, the figures quoted (if true) are always the gross sums, not what's left after all the necessary expenses have been taken into account. Secondly, they will be encouraged – even pressurised – into adopting life-styles that will eat through whatever is left of the vast sums that have been quoted at us in no time at all. Unless they are able to sustain or repeat at regular intervals their quoted financial luck they will soon be back to a no money situation. We are afraid those on the dole who have let their rent go into arrears, their electricity go unpaid, and with the creeping paranoia about this evil society will be the same ones who, if they were to achieve sudden wealth, would in no time at all be owing insurmountable back debts to the tax man, have managers demanding their percentage long after the money was spent, and be swapping their paranoia about society for paranoia peppered with bitterness that they had been 'ripped off' all the way along the line.

Money, as often quoted, is not the root of all evil. We do know what the root of all evil is. That is to be explained in

one of our future manuals, and if we were to tell you the answer now you would not bother trying to have a Number One.

We do not expect this chapter on money to have helped in any direct, practical way towards making the Number One slot but it may have helped dispel any illusions you might have had.

BANKS AND THEIR DIRECT AND PRACTICAL FUNCTIONS

Our age will be remembered in the future as a period in history when banks went to ridiculous and unparalleled lengths to compete with each other to win the allegiances of the young and account free. If future historians were to base their research on what young Britain was like in the late eighties solely on the substance of bank adverts, you would definitely be rated as the most despicable types since we were kicked out of the Garden.

So please, if you do take any notice of the bank and money ads – forget it. That said, we are afraid you are going to need a bank account, and the better the relationship you can develop with your bank the easier things will be. Our relationships with banks have always been fraught with difficulties. Banks are in the business of making money by lending it. The more they lend the more they make. They want us, the punters, to become addicted for life to the false sense of security it gives us. Banks will go to extremes thinking up new and ingenious ways of getting us to borrow money from them. First and foremost they want us to get into property: 'Buy a house', because with your property as security they can always lend you more and more money. If things were to go badly wrong and you weren't able to keep up the interest payments they

could always force you out of house and home and get their money back that way.

Of course, it would be bad for the banks if they were seen to be throwing too many families on to the street or forcing businesses to the wall in order to redeem their loans. They would always prefer to lend more money so as to help pay off the interest on the earlier loans. Banks have spent millions over the past few years trying to destroy the public's old impression of the bank manager in bowler, broly and pinstripe, to the approachable and amiable sort of chap who will attempt at all times to say 'Yes!'. They have only done this, not because they like being nicer, but to seduce you into coming in and borrowing more money. Remember, when you are going in to see a bank manager you're going to see a pusher; a pusher dealing in one of the purest, most addictive drugs – money.

If for some reason you already have some property (or have a family who are foolish enough to indulge your wilder whims and provide you with collateral) you will be at a disadvantage. As you sit there in the sucker's seat in the manager's office he will smell the scent of securities. He will be checking your wrist veins to sink his syringe in and all the time he will be telling you about the Genesis CD he has just bought, or how you would never guess it but he used to be a punk and stills treasures his copy of 'Neat Neat' by the Damned.

So it is best to go in there skins and with no securities. Of course there is no point in asking to borrow any money. Just put yourself in the bank manager's position; some unlikely youth comes in, looking like nothing in their ad campaigns, and makes some outrageous request for a twenty-thousand-pound unguaranteed loan to finance the making

of a Number One hit single. Would you let them have the money? If this lad were to start brandishing a copy of this publication by The Timelords, you would advise him that he had been had and should get a refund on the book instantly before going out to look for a vacancy on a youth training scheme.

As we said in the introductory chapter having no money sharpens the wits. Forces you never to make the wrong decision. There is no safety net to catch you when you fall.

If you already have an account with a bank, make the appointment with the manager or his assistant. If not, get into any branch (the nearest to where you live will do as long as it's one of the big five). Open a current account and make that appointment. Do this on Monday afternoon while you're out and about. The appointment should be for some time that week. Just tell them you are setting up a small, independent record label – no big plans yet, just aiming to put out the one single and see how it goes. Tell him there will be a couple of times when you will have to issue cheques before others have come in. No big stuff. You will let him know beforehand. The most important thing is to get a rapport going with him; attempt to keep him in touch with what is happening over the next few weeks.

As well as having the pusher's instincts, the bank manager has the instincts of the old mother hen. The small business accounts are his baby chicks and he loves to watch them grow. If you were to go in and try and convince him of world domination plans he could only be disappointed with whatever results you had. It is necessary that he should feel part of it all when everything starts to take off. It will be then that you will need his serious help.

It will be then that you will have to find £17,000 by the end of the week and there is no sight of anything coming in until the beginning of the next month.

MONDAY EVENING

Spend Monday evening round at some mate's house. See if he has any records worth borrowing. More importantly, tell him what you are up to and see if he has any great ideas worth using. It is a little known fact, but when it comes to creative ideas the majority of people are creative geniuses. Your mate is bound to be one of them. It's just that all these folks never dare to translate their creative brilliance into reality. We guess a couple of libraries could be filled with the reasons why they never attempt it. Something to do with mother and when she first said 'No!'

That night, don't forget to set the alarm for 8am the next morning. Before you do whatever it is you do before you go to sleep, see what group names are beginning to float up (mates are also a great source of group names).

TUESDAY MORNING

The history of pop music is littered with all sorts of unlikely people plucked from obscurity and chucked on top of the heap. Pop music would be thrown out of the Showbiz Ball if it could not provide its full quota of rags-to-riches stories. We have all heard the old tale about how it was the downtrodden working-class background that provided the true grit passion in the artist's work that won the hearts and minds of the masses. The other side of the same coin is that it is because of the down-trodden and working-class background that the smart middle-class machine was able to, unwittingly maybe, but ruthlessly all the same, exploit these raw and gullible talents to the full. With each new generation in pop music there comes along some sort of revolution where supposedly the kids are able to get up and do it for themselves: skiffle bands, protest singers, beat groups, punk rockers, u2 and Casio kids. Of course, the kids do very little for themselves. They might believe they are. Their public are encouraged to believe they are. All that is happening is that the new young waving fields of corn are allowed to grow full and ripe before a very strange combine harvester will come along and pick the few lucky ears of corn, while the rest of the field cheer, wither and die. A new harvest is always needed.

1988 saw the latest would-be revolution happen in pop music. The DJ, with his pair of Technics and box of records can make it to the top with a little help from a sample machine, squiggly bass line and beat box. Yet again this was interpreted as the masses finally liberating the means of making music from all the undesirables and now terminally unhip. These records were reportedly made for very little money. The common ingredient these records had that was far more important than the icing of 'Now' style that covers the age-old Golden Rules of Pop, is that they were being made by complete unknowns. No hype. No massive record company advances. No front covers in the rock papers. No loyal following built up over months of solid touring. They have all been released by what is commonly known as indie record labels (however, this is not the place to define indie). Since the rise of the indie label in the days of post-punk, they have provided a healthy means for no-hopers, outsiders and terminally angry types to unload their angst. They have also proved rich hunting grounds for the major record companies looking for fresh meat.

The indie record companies were cottage industries fuelled by enthusiasm, passion and belief. Some grew, became strong and established international links, whilst others withered and died. The strong ones were able to provide platforms for the artists who were able to build up large and loyal followings to develop and prosper, even to have moderate hit-single success. The Smiths and New Order on Rough Trade and Factory respectively were the obvious champions in this.

It was always understood that it was only the major record Companies that had the infrastructure, the money,

the efficiency, the might, the power and the means of persuasion to take singles all the way to THE TOP. Like the giants of Fleet Street weighed down by ancient union agreements and strapped to out of date means of production, the major record companies are beginning to look like lumbering dinosaurs.

Over the past ten years anybody with overtly commercial material would never have considered using the indie network. Everybody with an eye on the Top Spot knew that the indie scene was for the spotty and marginal and people who celebrated the glories of being spotty and marginal. The majors were secure in their knowledge of this.

All through these years, alongside the scratchy and austere indie labels, has grown what might be termed the independent service industries, providing services that previously only the majors could command: numerous pluggers, publicists, sales forces and, most important of all, reliable and comprehensive distribution. All of these independent service industries are now highly organised and competing to cut deals with YOU, the much sought-after client. Each of these individual services will have a section dedicated to their own peculiar practices.

However efficient and organised these service industries became, they could only do so much with the spotty and marginal. But it was only a matter of time before something came along from within the indie scene that was neither 'spotty' nor 'marginal' and had definite mass appeal. That record was 'Pump Up The Volume' by MARRS. It was a turning point. That record not only became Number One in the UK it became an international smash.

The 'indie scene' in this country since then has been filled with a new-found confidence: everything can be

achieved. It was as if having a Number One single was the last bastion of the majors.

Certain cynics will point fingers and whinge that the indies of today will be just the majors of tomorrow. Wasn't Richard Branson and his Virgin Records the ultimate hippy ideal in the early seventies? We won't deny that behind the majority of indie labels is a would-be Branson, whose stunted megalomania will undoubtedly be reflected in the way he brings up his children.

From now on, whether or not the technology makes the traditional musician's craft redundant, the young creative type will become more aware that he is able to control more areas of the way his music is communicated to the masses. The manipulation of this control will become a very important creative form of expression in itself.

Of course there is a place for the major record company in the future as there is still a place for brass bands, large national orchestras and Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals. The precise function the major record companies will play in the music business as we turn the corner into the twenty-first century is something we are not going to bother guessing at. One thing they (and, we suppose, all major international companies) are good at is moving the goal posts; probably because they owned them in the first place.

As more and more creators of music begin to realise that it is possible to make records themselves and steer those records in whatever direction they want, at the same time as retaining all the copyright in the product (and thus a bigger chunk of the action), the attractiveness of signing your soul and its products away from now to eternity (well at least fifty years after the day you die) will come to look

rather silly. Nothing to do with ideology, just straightforward business sense.

Twenty-five years ago no unknown artist signing to a major record company would dare demand the right to only record their own material. The success of the Beatles changed that. In the past ten years it has become the trend for the writer (of songs) to retain the copyright of their work and either just get the publishers to administer it, or have their own accountants do the lot.

If the rise of the UK indie label can be seen as a positive offspring of punk sensibilities, a very negative one was the cult of the very big advance. This can be traced back to the supposed situationist shenanigans of Malcolm McClaren. The idea that the major record companies were somehow being ripped off and some clever scam was being pulled was totally false. There was no Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle. The four living ex-members of the band have nothing left except fading memories of their glory days, like fuddled old soldiers; a front man trapped by his own cynicism and a corpse forever young. While the record companies and publishers involved are still getting bigger and stronger and the employees are busy negotiating their next rise over the expense-account lunch. It's as if Malcolm never understood Faust.

Another point that we can throw in at this juncture is that down through the history of pop music the cult of the Svengali figure has often risen. Svengalis might be very interesting characters, but they invariably make bad businessmen. They spend too much of their time cultivating their own image and coping with their own creative urges.

We repeat, it has only been possible since the beginning of 1988 to single-handedly achieve what this manual is all

about. The myth of the major label deal is totally blown. Their might and power is too slow moving. Their seduction techniques threadbare and dated. The barn door cannot be closed. While the new technology might be the downfall of any kind of standards in the world of television, in both printing and music the future is ours.

JUST AFTER 1 PM TUESDAY

Just after 1pm Tuesday, telephone the studio that you have booked and tell them you are going to need someone who can programme, ideally a programmer who can play the keyboards. Every studio can get one for you. This programmer is going to be the person who will provide sample, originate, compute, even play all the music you will need on your record. They usually have a boffin's mentality mixed with the talent of a musical wizard. We are afraid they will not be included in the price of the studio, but the studio manager should be able to sort out the going rate for you and cut the deal with him. Get him booked for the full five days.

Have a spot of lunch and read the following chapter. It will allay any doubts you might have in your talents as a hit song writer and explains the Golden Rules. Between now and next Monday morning you are going to have to come up with the goods. Those goods are out there waiting for you to find before the others get there.

THE GOLDEN RULES

Leiber and Stoller, Goffin and King, Berry Gordy, Chinn and Chapman, and Peter Waterman have all understood the Golden Rules thoroughly. The reason why Waterman will not continue churning out Number Ones from now until the end of the century, and the others had only limited reigns, is not because Lady Luck's hand strayed elsewhere or that fashion moved on, it is because after you have had a run of success and your coffers are full, keeping strictly to the GRS is boring. It all becomes empty and meaningless. Some have become emotionally or business-wise embroiled with artists whose own ambitions now lie elsewhere and far from merely having Number Ones. Lieber and Stoller could walk into a studio tomorrow and have a world-wide Number One in three months if they were so motivated.

The basic Golden Rules as far as they apply to writing a debut single that can go to Number One in the UK Charts are as follows:

Do not attempt the impossible by trying to work the whole thing out before you go into the studio. Working in a studio has to be a fluid and creative venture but at all times remember at the end of it you are going to have to have a 7-inch version that fulfils all the criteria perfectly.

Do not try and sit down and write a complete song. Songs that have been written in such a way and reached Number One can only be done by the true song-writing genius and be delivered by artists with such forceful convincing passion that the world HAS to listen. You know the sort of thing, 'Sailing' by Rod Stewart, 'Without You' by Nilsson.

What the Golden Rules can provide you with is a framework that you can slot the component parts into.

Firstly, it has to have a dance groove that will run all the way through the record and that the current 7-inch-buying generation will find irresistible. Secondly, it must be no longer than three minutes and thirty seconds (just under three minutes and twenty seconds is preferable). If they are any longer Radio One daytime DJs will start fading early or talking over the end, when the chorus is finally being hammered home – the most important part of any record. Thirdly, it must consist of an intro, a verse, a chorus, second verse, a second chorus, a breakdown section, back into a double-length chorus and outro. Fourthly, lyrics. You will need some, but not many.

CAUSALITY PLUS A PINCH OF MYSTICISM

It is going to be a construction job, fitting bits together. You will have to find the Frankenstein in you to make it work. Your magpie instincts must come to the fore. If you think this just sounds like a recipe for some horrific monster, be reassured by us, all music can only be the sum or part total of what has gone before. Every Number One song ever written is only made up from bits from other songs. There is no lost chord. No changes untried. No extra notes to the scale or hidden beats to the bar. There is no point in searching for originality. In the past, most writers of songs spent months in their lonely rooms strumming their guitars, or bands in rehearsals have ground their way through endless riffs before arriving at the song that takes them to the very top. Of course, most of them would be mortally upset to be told that all they were doing was leaving it to chance before they stumbled across the tried and tested. They have to believe it is through this sojourn they arrive at the grail; the great and original song that the world will be unable to resist.

So why don't all songs sound the same? Why are some artists great, write dozens of classics that move you to tears, say it like it's never been said before, make you laugh, dance, blow your mind, fall in love, take to the

streets and riot? Well, it's because although the chords, notes, harmonies, beats and words have all been used before, their own soul shines through; their personality demands attention. This doesn't just come via the great vocalist or virtuoso instrumentalist. The Techno sound of Detroit, the most totally linear programmed music ever, lacking any human musicianship in its execution, reeks of sweat, sex and desire. The creators of that music just press a few buttons and out comes – a million years of pain and lust.

We await the day with relish that somebody dares to make a dance record that consists of nothing more than an electronically programmed bass drum beat that continues playing the fours monotonously for eight minutes. Then, when somebody else brings one out using exactly the same bass drum sound and at the same beats per minute (BPM), we will all be able to tell which is the best, which inspires the dance floor to fill the fastest, which has the most sex and the most soul. There is no doubt, one will be better than the other.

What we are basically saying is, if you have anything in you, anything unique, what others might term originality, it will come through whatever the component parts used in your future Number One are made up from.

Creators of music who desperately search for originality usually end up with music that has none because no room for their spirit has been left to get through. The complete history of the blues is based on one chord structure, hundreds of thousands of songs using the same three basic chords in the same pattern. Through this seemingly rigid formula has come some of the twentieth century's greatest music.

In our case we used parts from three very famous songs, Gary Glitter's 'Rock 'n' Roll', 'The Doctor Who Theme' and the Sweet's 'Blockbuster' and pasted them together, neither of us playing a note on the record. We know that the finished record contains as much of us in it as if we had spent three months locked away somewhere trying to create our master-work. The people who bought the record and who probably do not give a blot about the inner souls of Rockman Rock or King Boy D knew they were getting a record of supreme originality.

Don't worry about being accused of being a thief. Even if you were, you have not got the time to take the trial and error route.

The simplest thing to do would be to flick through your copy of *The Guinness Book of Hits*, find a smash from a previous era and do a cover of it, dressing it up in the clothes of today. Every year there is at least a couple of artists who get their debut Number One this way. From the eighties we have already had:

Dave Stewart and Barbara Gaskin, *It's My Party*
 Roxy Music, *Jealous Guy*
 Soft Cell, *Tainted Love*
 Paul Young, *Wherever I Lay My Hat*
 Captain Sensible, *Happy Talk*
 Neil, *Hole In My Shoe*
 Tiffany, *I Think We're Alone Now*
 Wet Wet Wet, *With A Little Help*
 Yazz, *The Only Way Is Up*

There are, however, the negative facts in taking this route. Using an already proven song can give you a false sense of

security when you are in the studio recording. You can end up under the illusion that the song is such a classic that whatever you do, the song itself will be able to carry it through. You tend to lose your objectivity in the production of your version. The all-important radio producers hate nothing more than a classic song covered badly.

The classic oldy, while fulfilling all the Golden Rules in pop, might have a lyrical content that may only ever relate to one period in pop history. There have been numerous past Number Ones where this has been the case:

Scott McKenzie, *San Francisco*
 The Beach Boys, *Good Vibrations*
 The Beatles, *All You Need Is Love*
 Mott The Hoople, *All The Young Dudes*
 MARRS, *Pump Up the Volume*

Unless there is a revival of the zeitgeist of times past where the lyric in some way makes sense again, these songs should be stayed well clear of.

Sometimes, almost the opposite can happen. By covering a cleverly picked old song it can be re-recorded in such a way that it is now more relevant to today's new record buyers, both lyrically and musically, than the original was to the past generations of hit makers. Tiffany's 'I Think We're Alone Now' and Yazz's 'The Only Way Is Up' are both perfect examples of this in 1988. The original of 'I Think We're Alone Now' by Tommy Roe and the late seventies cover by The Rubinoos were classics for the discerning but could not compete in the UK marketplace of their day.

The other negative in doing a cover version is that you

lose all the writing credit. That means you will earn no publishing money on the record, however many it sells. We will explain later the mysteries of publishing, but for now just take it from us that having a Number One with a cover, as opposed to your own song, is the equivalent of throwing away a minimum of £10,000.

There is no denying that picking the right smash from the past and recording it well will result in a sure-fire success. The producers of the day-time shows at Radio One will only have to hear the opening bars of your record to know that there will be a few slots in their shows for it; 'the housewives at home and the husbands on the building site' will be singing along with it immediately. It's not going to take them three or four listens before they decide whether they like the song. That decision was made long before you ever thought of having a Number One. As for the current 7-inch-single-buying generation who might have never heard the song before, they will automatically be given the chance to hear the record three or four times on the radio.

If there is not a cover that takes your fancy the trick is to construct your song out of disguised, modified and enhanced parts of previous smashes, so that those Radio One producers, tv youth programme researchers and multiple-chain-record-store stock buyers will subliminally warm to your track and feel at ease with it.

We obviously took the middle route in not doing a straight cover, but in doing the above so blatantly that we had to give away the majority Of our publishing, thus losing a sizeable chunk of the readies.

GROOVE

The first of the component parts you are going to need to find is the irresistible dance floor groove.

Before we go any further we had better define 'groove'. It is basically the drum and bass patterns and all the other musical sounds on the record that are neither hummable or singalongable to. Groove is the underlying sex element of the record, and we are afraid for UK Number Ones this can never be left too rabidly raw on the 7-inch format. It upsets our subliminal national moral code. We can cope with smut but not grind. Of course, there are the odd exceptions.

In the same way that our sexual fantasies change and develop, sometimes double back over a period of months, so do our dance-floor tastes in groove. It is always on the move, searching for the ultimate turn-on and when you are almost there it's off again and you're left looking for a new direction.

Black American records have always been the most reliable source of dance groove. These records down through the years have inevitably laid so much emphasis on the altar of groove and so very little on fulfilling the other Golden Rules that they very rarely break through into the UK Top Ten, let alone making the Number One spot. A

by-product of this situation is that gangsters of the groove from Bo Diddley on down believe they have been ripped off, not only by the business but by all the artists that have followed on from them. This is because the copyright laws that have grown over the past one hundred years have all been developed by whites of European descent, and these laws state that fifty per cent of the copyright of any song should be for the lyrics, the other fifty per cent for the top line (sung) melody; groove doesn't even get a look in. If the copyright laws had been in the hands of blacks of African descent, at least eighty per cent would have gone to the creators of the groove, the remainder split between the lyrics and the melody. If perchance you are reading this and you are both black and a lawyer, make a name for yourself. Right the wrongs.

The best place to find the groove that 7-inch-single buyers will want to be tapping their toes to in three months time is to get down to the hippest club in your part of the country that is playing import American black dance records. The unknown track the DJ plays that gets both the biggest response on the floor and has you joining the throng will have the groove you are looking for. Either try and get the name of the track that night, or at least remember some stand-out feature of the record. If you are lucky to have a specialist dance shop near you they should have this record you are after.

If there is neither a suitable club or specialist dance shop in your part of the country don't throw in the towel as this is where the dance music compilations we have instructed you to buy on Monday morning come in. Stick them on the record player, turn it up loud and get lost in the groove, leave your mind on the bookshelf where it belongs, feel

yourself if need be but keep going until you 'feel the force' and you are 'lost in music', when the only answer to the question 'can you feel it' is 'yes'.

Pure dance music, if it has any lyrical content at all, will only deal in the emotions experienced within the four walls of a club late at night – basically desire and, more importantly, that area which is beyond desire at the very centre of the Human Psyche. Everything else is meaningless. Any creator of pure dance music that is attempting to communicate any other subject should be treated with deep suspicion. With a danger of getting too carried away on our own pretensions we state that it is through dance music and dancing we are able to get momentarily back to the Garden. Of course, in the clear light of day this is all very silly.

At the time of writing it is the Summer of Love 1988 and we would seriously advise anybody in search of the Groove to spend the night at the ubiquitous acid house event, drink very little alcohol, lose your mind on the dance floor and shake your hands in the air 'till you feel it. Of course drugs are something we cannot be seen to advocate, but we understand that a certain very expensive narcotic makes this a lot clearer.

'Can you feel it?' Of course you do.

By the time you read this acid house will already be history, but it is always easy to find out what's happening. There is an army of eager young media types out there doing the research for you and writing it all up in any one of the competing youth-orientated journals.

We of course used the Glitter beat, which was more by accident than design. It being the most clubfooted white beat going, it goes against the grain of what we are advis-

ing above. We think the British love/hate relationship with that said beat can only be tried once a decade. They won't take it any more than that.

On a far less metaphysical level, groove has to be understood in the practical terms of beats, bars and BPMs. Except on very rare occasions all pop music is rhythmically based on having four beats to the bar. You naturally tap your toe to the beat and every time you tap your toe four times is one bar, you naturally clap your hands or snap your fingers on every second beat (twice every bar).

The speed of modern records is measured by the amount of beats per minute (BPM) there are in any given record. Using BPMs as a measurement has only come into existence since the early eighties, since which time nearly all records have been made with the use of a click track (electronic metronome). This enables any musicians who may play on a track to keep in perfect time. In bygone times records might have speeded up and slowed down throughout the performance, thus an accurate BPM could not be quoted. Knowing the BPM of each record in his collection is all important to a club DJ. So that he can be sure that when he is programming each section of the night he won't jolt the dancers on the floor by suddenly dropping from a 124 BPM record down to an 87 BPM record, then back up to one that is 114 BPM. Heavy acid sessions the exception.

The different styles in modern club records are usually clustered around certain BPMs: 120 is the classic BPM for House music and its various variants, although it is beginning to creep up. Hi NRG is always above 125 but very rarely has it reached the dizzy heights of 140 BPMs. Rap records traditionally vary between 90 and 110, but in an attempt to stay with the current (Summer '88) domination

of House, are speeding up. In doing this rap has lost some of its slow, mean and cool strut feel. LL Cool J or Rakim would never be seen dead trying to rap at 120 BPM, but those whose commercial instincts are more important than their home-boy cool may attempt it to keep their hit single profile high.

The classic rare groove tracks that found favour throughout 1987 and into early '88 were all recorded in the early seventies before click tracks and drum machines held sway to bay and are all oozing around and below 90 BPMs, guaranteeing plenty of slippery grunt and grind.

In this day and age no song with a BPM over 135 will ever have a chance of getting to Number One. The vast majority of regular club-goers will not be able to dance to it and still look cool.

The vast majority of indie bands, however large their cult following is, who play what various music journalists often describe as 'perfect, classic pop', will never see the inside of the Top Five for one reason alone: they perform all their songs above the 135 BPM ceiling. Their love traumas and balls of confusion of hate and bile all rush by at some immeasurable blur of a BPM.

As we have already mentioned, the Golden Rule for a classic Number One single is intro, verse one, chorus one, verse two, chorus two, breakdown section, double chorus, outro.

Each of these sections will be made up of bars in groupings of multiples of four. So you might have an intro containing four bars, a verse sixteen bars and a chorus eight bars. At times the first verses can be double length verses, or the second chorus a double length. These sort of decisions are not going to have to be finally made until you

reach the mixing stage of the record, when the engineer will have to start editing the whole track to make it work in the most concise and exciting way possible within three minutes and thirty seconds.

Hopefully, at some time over the remaining days of the week, you will have been able to get out to a club and found the groove you need, been able to buy it on vinyl and get it home. It has to be the 12-inch version as this will have whole great tracts of raw groove where each of the component parts of the groove are broken down and left exposed for your engineer and programmer to study and imitate when it comes to recording your record. Do not make the mistake of making a habit of 'going clubbing'; it is a way of life that people can get trapped in. They begin to believe if they are not continually going to clubs they will miss out on something. The only thing that they do miss out on is themselves. Once in a club you have to leave your mind outside.

CHORUS AND TITLE

The next thing you have got to have is a chorus. The chorus is the bit in the song that you can't help but sing along with. It is the most important element in a hit single because it is the part that most people carry around with them in their head, when there is no radio to be heard, no video on TV, and they are far from the dance floor. It's the part that nags you while day-dreaming in the classroom or at work or as you walk down the street to sign on. It's the part that finally convinces the punters to make that trip down to the record shop and buy it. So, slip on the 12-inch or your dance compilation and sing along with the breakdown sections: any old words will do, just whatever comes out of your mouth. If you have difficulty in forming a tune in your head or you feel a bit inhibited, flick through your copy of *The Guinness Book of Hits* and pick any Top Five record that takes your fancy and see if you can sing the chorus of it along to the track.

Take for example:

That's the way a-ha, a-ha
I like it a-ha, a-ha
That's the way a-ha, a-ha
I like it a-ha, a-ha

by KC and the Sunshine Band. That one usually works and should get you going in the right direction but there are hundreds to choose from.

The lyrics for the chorus must never deal with anything but the most basic of human emotions. This is not us trying to be cynical in a clever sort of way when we say 'stick to the clichés'. The clichés are the clichés because they deal with the emotional topics we all feel. No records are bought in vast quantities because the lyrics are intellectually clever or deal in strange and new ideas. In fact, the lyrics can be quite meaningless in a literal sense but still have a great emotional pull. An obvious example of this was the chorus of our own record:

Doctor Who, hey Doctor Who
 Doctor Who, in the Tardis
 Doctor Who, hey Doctor Who
 Doctor Who, Doc, Doctor Who
 Doctor Who, Doc, Doctor Who

Gibberish of course, but every lad in the country under a certain age related instinctively to what it was about. The ones slightly older needed a couple of pints inside them to clear away the mind debris left by the passing years before it made sense. As for girls and our chorus, we think they must have seen it as pure crap. A fact that must have limited to zero our chances of staying at The Top for more than one week.

Stock, Aitkin and Waterman, however, are kings of writing chorus lyrics that go straight to the emotional heart of the 7-inch-single-buying girls in this country. Their most successful records will kick into the chorus

with a line which encapsulates the entire emotional meaning of the song. This will obviously be used as the title.

As soon as Rick Astley hit the first line of the chorus on his debut single it was all over – the Number One position was guaranteed:

'I'm never going to give you up'

It says it all. It's what every girl in the land whatever her age wants to hear her dream man tell her. Then to follow that line with:

'I'm never gonna let you down
 I'm never going to fool around or upset you'

GENIUS.

As soon as they had those lyrics written they must have known they could have taken out a block booking on the Number One slot. Then within the next twelve months to have written the chorus:

'I should be so lucky
 Luck, lucky, lucky
 I should be so lucky in love'

Out of context, as meaningless to lads as our own Doctor Who chorus was to girls but in those three lines there is for many more meaning than in the complete collected works of Morrissey.

Stock, Aitkin and Waterman are able to spot a phrase,

not actually a catch phrase, but a line that the nation will know exactly what is being talked about, and then use it perfectly:

'Fun Love and Money'
'Showing Out'
'Got To Be Certain'
'Respectable'
'Toy Boy'
'Cross My Broken Heart'

They are ridiculed by much of the media and only have their royalty statements for comfort. History will put them up there with Spector and the boys. Waterman might be a loud-mouthed, arrogant, narrow-minded self-publicist, but the man has never outgrown his true, deep and genuine love of 'Now' pop music.

The year that the pair of us spent working with Stock, Aitkin and Waterman pulled into focus what we had learned about pop music throughout the rest of our lives.

Michael Jackson may be the biggest singing star in the world. Sold more LPs than any other artist at any time in the history of pop, but he has had very few UK Number Ones. If he would like to make amends on this front he should start co-writing with the SAW team or read this manual. He has quite a bit to learn about the opening line of a chorus.

We have just taken a coffee break from writing this lot and while in the cafe have come up with the ultimate Stock, Aitkin and Waterman chorus never written. It's called 'Live In Lover', either performed by Sinitta or ideally by a Dagenham blonde called Sharon:

'Live in lover I want you to be
My live in lover for eternity,'

Either use it for yourselves or we will go and blow what last vestiges of credibility we have and do it ourselves. We can see it now: we'd call the act 'Sharon Meets The KLF' and of course the B-side would have to be 'Sharon Joins The JAMS'. If there are any good looking Sharons out there that want to be pop stars please don't hesitate to contact us.

We are afraid you can't just go down to the local supermarket and listen to the check-out girls' talk and hope you can pick up the right line before Waterman gets to it. The line has to come to you and when it does you've got to grab it. Mindlessly singing along to the 12-inch groove track you have is the best way.

Morrisey has undoubtedly come up with some of the wittiest titles of the decade. Shakespeare's Sisters' 'Girl-friend In A Coma' or 'William It Was Really Nothing' are classic. However, with titles like these he will always be guaranteed a non Top Five placing.

We made the mistake of calling our Number One 'Doctorin' The Tardis'. Obviously, we thought it a clever play on Coldcut's 'Doctorin The House'. We had the title before we made the record. If we had had our wits about us we should have changed it to plain 'Doctor Who' or at least 'Hey! Doctor Who'. Us trying to be witty-clever must have lost us a few all-important sales.

Do not attempt writing chorus lyrics that deal in regret, jealousy, hatred or any other negative emotions. These require a vocal performer of great depth to put them over well: the epic Euro balladeers or the kings of Country, the

great soul men or the crown prince of hate – Johnny Rotten. You should stick to nonsense, pleasure, good times, 'I wanna dance all night long, love you forever, or at least until the morning comes', but nothing too sensual; that too requires too much performance talent. Just remember there is a difference between bland cliché and cliché, and only you can tell the difference in the context of the song you are constructing.

So make sure you find a title that can be used as the opening line in your chorus and that the chorus is no longer than eight bars.

SINGING AND SINGERS (TO SING OR NOT TO SING)

You must be worrying by now how you, or if not you, who on earth is going to front this record! If you already think you are a great singer and a well happening front person, then we have a problem. It means you will have the sort of ego that will render it totally impossible for you to be objective about everything else that has got to be done.

Singers have historically made the worst producers of their own work. The reason for this is simply that singers have to become so emotionally involved in their performance it cancels out any sort of over view. At the very least they need a musical partner that can give them some direction. If a singer was able to have this calculated view of their own work the end product would undoubtedly come over as cold and empty.

So if you do see yourself as a singer, find a partner fast before going any further.

If you do not have ambitions to sing it looks like you are in luck, as we have entered a period of pop history where singing as a focal point to communicate the emotional content of a Number One hit single is not necessary. The potential of this is something that seems to have been forgotten since the Beatles took their place on the world stage

back in 1963. Yet again we have to thank the advent of DJ style records for helping rediscover this fact.

The club DJ (like his forerunner the dance band leader of the thirties, forties and fifties) realises that the most important thing is keeping the dance floor full, and the thing that keeps the dancers dancing now (as it was then) is the music with its underpinning groove factor. Singing throughout has always just provided a distraction from the main event – what is happening on the dance floor and not on the stage.

The balance is to have a vocal chorus with instrumental verses. This will be the form that a sizeable percentage of chart music will take for some time to come, long after the novelty of scratching and blatant sampling has worn off.

With debut records that become big hits it will be even more noticeable. A debut record on becoming a hit relies totally on its novelty quality. There is no fan base rushing out to buy it. Instant voice recognition of the artist doesn't exist. People don't get into the quality of a singer's voice until they have heard at least three tracks by him or her.

A quality singer might sell platinum albums and go on to have an incredibly successful long-term career, but the sound of their voice would never have got their debut single to Number One. Benny Hill had more of a chance getting to Number One with 'Ernie' than Aretha Franklin ever has.

The only way a singer's voice can help it get to Number One is if it has such a distinctive quality the world can't help but react to it instantly, almost to the point of inspiring ridicule: Kevin Rowland's performance of 'Geno', 'Save Your Love' by René and Renate and 'With A Little Help From My Friends' by Joe Cocker are three examples

that spring to mind. We are sure if you check your *Guinness Book of Hits* you will find dozens more.

SO UNLESS YOU KNOW OF SOMEBODY DOWN YOUR WAY WHO HAS GOT A RIDICULOUSLY OUTRAGEOUS VOICE THAT'S GOING TO GRAB THE PUNTERS' ATTENTION WITH ONE HEARING AND WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR RECORD, FORGET IT. THE WORLD IS FULL OF COMPETENT SINGERS THAT DON'T GET TO NUMBER ONE.

The vocals for the chorus of your record are going to be easy enough to sort out. They need no individual distinctive qualities whatsoever. When you get into the studio they will be able to book a couple of backing singers for you. All studios are in touch with numerous local singers desperate to do any sessions they can; you only have to decide whether to have male, female or a mixture of both. Of course, if you want an 'all lads together' type chorus like we had with 'Doctorin' The Tardis' you just rope in whoever's hanging around the studio at the time and record it. That cuts out having to pay proper session singers. Nobody would dare ask to be paid for having a laugh, acting the lad – buy them a pint and they will be well happy.

Singers – good or bad – are invariably a problem. They not only make incredibly bad time-keepers, which can lead to disastrous consequences when you are facing a jam-packed schedule during the period when your record has entered the Top 30 but not yet made Number One, they also tend to confuse their role as singer of songs with that of would-be world leaders.

For the majority of people the sound of the vocals and the words that are being sung throughout the verses just merge into the overall sound of the track. The words that

are being sung could be any old gibberish, only the words to the chorus have any real importance. Of course there are the exceptions when the classic narrative song breaks through and storms the Number One slot. These can never be planned and I'm sure the performers of these freak hits are as surprised as anybody when it happens. So unless you want to risk everything on some bizarre tale you have to tell, stick with us.

When it comes to TV performances, singers make obvious focal points for the cameraman – thus the viewers at home are forced to watch. This is not because what is coming out of their mouths is of any great importance, it is just the easy option tradition of the medium. In fact most singers on Top of the Pops make complete prats of themselves. The viewers at home amuse themselves discussing this Prattishness, either the size of the singer's nose, his taste in shirts, the dickhead state of his haircut, or their shaggable qualities. This last example is usually done in such a disparaging and sexist way that it hardly inspires any real admiration. That said, you will need an act to go on TV with. People will need some sort of human focal point to relate to. When you get your three minutes of prime-time TV exposure you are going to have to grab the nation's attention in whatever way possible and at the same time keep the programme's director happy. The first half of 1988 saw numerous DJs standing motionless behind their pair of Technics desperately holding onto their cool. Its novelty value soon wore off.

We will sort out the problem of getting a nation-grabbing act together in a later chapter, once you have the track written and recorded.

The type of devotion inspired amongst pubescent

teenage girls for a certain singer or band takes effect on the second or third single. The hype machine is usually only smelling the scent by the second single and can then only shift into top gear on the third one.

The chapter's précis is the quality of a singer's voice and their attractiveness is only of any real importance in terms of a follow-up career.

THE VERSE (THE BASS RIFF FACTOR)

So now you can tackle the construction of the verse without worrying about singers.

Using the basic groove you have decided upon, you are now going to have to choose a bass line that will work as the basis for the whole song, or at least the verse sections. We take it there is no point in us trying to describe what the bass line is in any great detail, but it's the bit in the record that throbs and keeps the flow going. In days gone by it was provided by the bass guitar player, now it is all played by the programmed keyboards. Even if you want it to sound like a real bass guitar, a sampled sound of a bass guitar will be used, then programmed. It's easier than getting some thumb-slapping dickhead in.

The groove might already have a killer bass line in there, making the whole thing happen, and to remove it and exchange it for another might destroy what you have already got. There are plenty of monster bass lines out there to try. You will know them, they are the ones that you can almost hum. The great thing about bass lines is that they are in public domain. Nobody, even if they do recognise it, will seriously accuse you of ripping somebody else's bass line off.

Michael Jackson, who we cited earlier on for not being

that adept at coming up with the killer Number One hit choruses, CAN come up with the bass lines. 'Billy Jean' was the turning point in Jackson's career. That song, on his own admission, took him into the mega stratospheres where his myth now reigns. The fact is, 'Billy Jean' would be nothing without that lynx-on-the-prowl bass line; but he wasn't the first to use it. It had been featured in numerous dance tracks by various artists before him. Jackson and Quincy must have been hanging out around the pool table in their air-conditioned, dimmed-light-atmosphere LA studio one evening wondering: 'What?' when one of them came up with the idea of using the old lynx-on-the-prowl standby. Without making that decision back in 1981 there would have been no Pepsi Cola sponsored jamboree in 1988.

We are not trying to deny any of the very real talent that Jackson has, just trying to emphasise the possible importance of the killer bass line.

Serious groove merchants hate it when a song has a dynamite bass line for the verse and then when the chorus comes the chords change, dragging the bass away from its 'bad self' into having to follow those limp-wristed chords. For them the whole movement of the song is destroyed for the sake of some nursery-rhyme element they would rather see dumped.

Somehow these two important elements are going to have to be made to work together without the power of the chorus or the propulsion of verse bass riff being destroyed. Ideally, when a song hits its chorus it should feel it's the natural thing to happen, a release from the tension of the verse. By the end of the chorus you must feel like nothing is desired more than to slide back down into the vice-like grip of the bass line.

Some groove merchants have a talent for getting it all their own way by coming up with a bass riff that never shifts from the beginning of the song until the end: intro, choruses, verses, breakdowns, outro all fitting around the same bass riff. For a song to sound like this and work away from the confines of the dance floor, it is going to have to be a real mutha of a riff. There must be some pretty insistent action going on on top of it to keep the casual radio listener interested. Even on 'Billy Jean' they moved off the bass riff for the chorus.

FOR THE TIME BEING THE ONLY DECISION YOU ARE GOING TO NEED TO MAKE ABOUT THE VERSE IS GOING TO BE MAKING THIS DECISION ON WHICH BASS RIFF IS TO BE USED WITH THE OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE GROOVE TRACK.

THE INTRO

This is simple. The classic thing to do is have an instrumental version of the chorus. Sometimes a record might have a full-blown vocal chorus in the intro, but this is usually considered giving it all away too soon. The other regular intro used is created at the mixing stage of the record, where different elements can be thrown in until the whole track is happening. This is something you can leave to the engineer who is doing your mixing; they are usually full of creative ideas on how to start a record off. They usually like to hear a bit of atmospherics – they tend to think it denotes class. If he comes up with anything good, use it. This is a route that we originally took, but at a later stage, on the advice of our radio plugger, we stuck a weirded-out version of the chorus on the intro.

BRIDGES

Don't even think about them. They are for the more musically mature. If one happens it will happen in the studio. Your programmer might come up with an idea for one that helps take the song from the bass riff of the verse up into the celebration of the chorus. As always, if it's any good, use it.

Just remember that if somebody else who is directly involved in the making of your record provides you with chords for a bridge he has every right to expect a cut in the publishing. Not that giving away some of the action should deter you from using whatever is going to turn your recording into a Number One.

THE BREAKDOWN SECTION

Yet again you don't have to concern yourself with this at the pre-studio stage. Just account for its length in bars when you map out the structure of the song. Use the bass riff from the verse or some enticing variant on it that the programmer can come up with.

When mixing, the engineer should strip the track right back and then start piling in with the studio wizardry and gimmicks before hammering into the final chorus.

In years gone by this was the part of the song that would feature a solo. Nowadays, solos either get in the way or have to be fabulously stunning at the same time as being able to fit in with the studio sculpting that is going on around them. Having some guitarist give you his interpretation of what a really good guitar solo should sound like is totally out of the question. Guitar solos only work in modern pop records when they are over the top things full of hideous histrionics and lacking in any emotional depth whatsoever. This type of guitar solo is one of the very few things that heavy metal has given back to Top Ten chart music. Yet again, Jackson's name comes in here. It all started when he used Eddie Van Halen on the 'Thriller' L.P. So unless you have a mate that can play just like Eddie – forget it.

The only other reason for having a meaningless solo on your track is to give the record some instant profile upon the record's release by making it known in the media that it features a boring but sainted muso, thus giving it some fake cred. The tried and tested guest soloists of the late eighties are: Miles Davis on trumpet, Courtney Pine on saxophone and Stevie Wonder on harmonica. Untried possibilities that might create some interest would be Jimmy Page or Junior Walker. But really we would recommend you don't bother – unless you can get Jimi Hendrix to do it.

The last time the guest solo really helped on a Number One record was Stevie Wonder on Chaka Kahn's 'I Feel For You'. In the end it only provides the DJ on Radio One with a bit of a talking point or at best a clincher angle in getting a Newsbeat interview.

When song writers were craftsmen who sat in front of their pianos, heads filled with melodies and hands searching for chords, and long before multi-tracked recording studios became a vital aid in modern song construction, they would call this part of the song the 'middle eight' (it had eight bars). They would entertain themselves by introducing a different chord structure at this point with a refreshing new melody. This technique still has its charms but you can leave it to the people who take a pride in writing songs for the sake of their craft. Even Elton John doesn't bother with them these days. It's the sort of thing that Green from Scritti has a go at.

THE OUTRO

Back when whole bands went into a studio to record their songs they would pride themselves on their tight, well rehearsed, snappy endings. Either you end on fading over repeated choruses or have a couple of choruses and sink back into the moody atmospherics that started the song. Yet again your mix engineer is going to come up with the answer for you.

HANGING BITS

In some records there will be one or two bars stuck in between two of the sections where most of the music stops and a few bits are left hanging in the air before the whole track comes crashing back into the next section. We do not know if it has an official name, but it serves the purpose of adding dramatic effect to the song. It is a bit sophisticated for ourselves, but your programmer might recommend it – give it a go if he does.

That's it. There are no other parts that can possibly exist in Number One hit records. Re-listen to your copies of 'Now That's What I Call Music' or 'Hits' and practice picking out the different sections, counting the bars as you go.

KEYS, NOTES AND CHORDS

There are twelve different Major keys and twelve different Minor keys. In each key there is a scale of eight notes, the eighth note being the same as the first but an octave above. A chord is where two or more notes are played together. There are three basic Major chords and three basic Minor chords in each key.

You do not need to know the above, but if you do want to, that's it. Each song is recorded in a particular key. You can get the programmer to decide what key your song should be in by telling him that you want it to be the same as the basic groove you have picked.

Some Number Ones change key towards the end. The reason for this is an attempt to add dramatic effect into a song which is beginning to flag.

Zager and Evans in their staggering 'In The Year 2525', a Number One in 1969, took the unprecedented decision of moving their song up a key for every new verse. This added to the stunning qualities of the record. Something that today's 7-inch single buyers could not handle.

FRIDAY MORNING

Friday morning. Phone the studio. Check that everything is OK for starting at 11 am on Monday morning and that the programmer will be there on time. By Friday night you will have to have got yourself a title, a groove, a bass line, lyrics and melody for a chorus that you can sing at the top of your voice in the bath on Sunday evening. Write down the basic structure of the 7-inch version in your notebook.

THE WEEKEND

Take it easy over the weekend. Start fantasising about videos and Top of the Pops performances, things you will say in interviews and what your old teachers would think if they knew you had got a Number One.

Have some wild ideas for record sleeves or silly sadistic or sexy sounds to sample that can be used in the 12-inch mix. See what crazy ideas your friends come up with. Don't be proud, use them. They will love it.

Basically, have a good time Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, because the following week is going to feel like the most dreadful few days in your life. You are going to wish you had never seen this manual, and rue the day you ever thought you could ever put it into practice. At times suicide will seem like the only way out. Years of financial disaster will stretch out ahead. The debtors' gaol your only home.

Up until now you might have felt these chapters have been riddled with cynicism.

Cynicism is a terrible, disfiguring character trait if used by the individual who is forced to carry a bitter chip. He will use his cynicism to cope with the weight of life and all its trials. But cynicism harnessed to your advantage can help debunk fraudulent mysteries that prevent us from

sharing in what is possible and what is ours. At all times cynicism must be balanced with a belief and faith in the intrinsic goodness of our fellow man. Nobody really wants to be bad, even when they are pulling the trigger or handing out the towels for the non-existent showers.

You are not going to be able to cheat your way to the top. It is only by nurturing the goodness that everybody wants to express that the doors are going to be held open for you.

We all have the capacity for unlimited fantasy, it is the fuel of genius. Do not be afraid to turn on the tap and let it flow.

As we discussed before, a record will automatically equal more than the sum of its parts. However coldly we calculate the making of each part, our personality will be there on the record for the world to feel.

Fantasy can be a dangerous area to delve into, an unreal place to escape into. Fantasy is also the place where everything starts from. The place where a personality can grow. Where 'The best-laid schemes o' Mice an' Men' have all bred before climbing on to the drawing board, and long before the ploughshare has had a chance to lay it all to ruin. Do not be afraid of your fantasies. Dive into them. Swim far out and see what other strange fish are swimming with you. Bring what you can back. It will be these discoveries that you will be able to channel through the strict Golden Rules of the 7-inch single.

Without fantasy there would be nothing: man would have stayed up the trees, never ventured into the cave, Einstein would have foregone his relativity, Christ his ascension, Leonardo his Mona Lisa, Hitler his Third Reich, and Betty Ford her clinic.

SUNDAY NIGHT

Sunday night. Remember to listen to Bruno Brookes' Top 40 Show again.

Have a bath; it's the last chance you'll have of one until the end of the week. Remember to sing your chorus while you scrub your back. Sleep well.

FIVE DAYS IN A TWENTY-FOUR TRACK STUDIO

Monday morning. There is no turning back now. If you did you would look like a complete wimp to your mates who, although they might be telling you you are a total crackpot ejit for attempting it, will be harbouring a deep admiration for your gall. Not only that, but you will face a cancellation fee from the studio, which will amount to at least half the full costs for the week's hire.

Using your chosen mode of transport, get there for about quarter to eleven. Don't forget to bring your records, Guinness book, notebook and black Pentel.

Don't bring a briefcase or a filofax, you would be in danger of looking like a minor league group manager.

On arriving at the studio introduce yourself to the studio manager, find out where the kitchen is and put on the kettle. A day's work in the studio cannot start without first having a cup of tea.

On entering a recording studio for the first time you will naturally be impressed with all the gear. Do not be intimidated - it is all there ready to work for you. There will be thousands of dials, knobs and faders at the engineer's finger-tips and he will know what every one of them does. This might overawe you, but just remember he was most probably reading in *Studio Weekly*, only moments

before you walked in, about some new piece of studio hardware that's just come on the market and that every studio should now have if they are to stay in the race. That studio engineer is going to be worried that you will notice that they haven't already got it in this backwater of audio technology.

The programmer should already have arrived and have his gear set up. Sit down with them both. Get another cup of tea if need be, and then be totally frank with them. Don't try and bluff your way at all. Tell them that the game plan is to make a future Number One single. Play them the groove track you want to rip off, sing them your chorus lines and show them your chart of how the 7-inch record should be structured. Get the engineer to give you a quick tour of the studio and a rough idea of what everything does. Have the programmer explain what his computer/keyboard/sample linked together can achieve, revel in the MIDI revolution of it all, and then ask the engineer to either turn up or turn down the air-conditioning.

Tell the programmer that he should stretch your 7-inch calculation up to about six minutes to allow for the 12-inch mix then leave the two of them to get on with it; they will know what to do and you have already given them enough to keep them busy for the rest of the day. If you are technically minded feel free to watch them and learn all you can, or just sit back and answer their questions when they ask you. If something sounds wrong, tell them. If something sounds great, tell them. At all times encourage them.

If the studio has a tape op he will already be attempting to ply you with tea. If not, offer to get the engineer and programmer as many cups of tea as they can possibly con-

sume. To begin with they will look to you for direction, and you can tell them that A, B and C should sound like X, Y and Z record. Learning the language of making modern records is learning the language of talking about component parts and atmospheres of other people's records.

From now on in you will begin to feel the inevitable pull of the unseen life force of the record you have allowed to be created. It will be as if you are in a sailing boat and suddenly from nowhere a wisp of wind fills the sails. Your job is to hold on to the rudder and at all times never lose sight of the harbour lights. Let the crew bail out the water. Let the crew trim the sails. Let the crew man the galley. Remember, if you ever leave go of the rudder to help the crew all hands may be lost – along with any chance of ever hearing your record being played at five minutes to seven on Radio One on a Sunday evening.

From now on in nearly everybody you will be dealing with has the possibility of becoming a millionaire by what they do. The success of your record is going to help them get there, even if they don't share directly in the profits of your little enterprise. It is because of this that you will not come across any 'jobsworths'. Quite the opposite; nothing will be too much trouble.

Engineers are a rare breed. They all assume they are the greatest engineers in the world – or at least the greatest undiscovered engineers in the world – or at the very least, given the right gear to work with and a project like the next Sting or Peter Gabriel album, would soon become the greatest.

The plus side of this is he will work his guts out to prove this is the case. The down side is that since Sting started making records of the sound quality the engineer

aspires to, he has stopped having UK Number One singles. Those early eighties Police records had a lot more in there than the Great British singles buying public wanted than any of his mature stuff, whatever the calibre of the guest jazz musicians.

In five days you are not going to make something that is going to be able to compete with the latest album engineered by Bob Clearmountain or produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. Once the engineer is on your wavelength and sees that you are dedicated to your cause, he will go with you.

In their own world, studio engineers can become superstars demanding points (a percentage of the gross takings) on the mega-selling platinum albums they work on. They can become very rich men. The great thing about them is they very rarely become openly arrogant; if one were to he would never get on. The years of making endless cups of tea for the client has knocked it out of him. Also the successful engineer knows he doesn't have to be arrogant. His craftsmanship on the records he has worked on does all the talking. Whereas the successful artist suffers from a continual paranoia that his bluff might be called and he will be seen to be a fake. He needs his arrogance to hide behind. He will also convince himself that his public expects a certain amount of arrogance from him. The trouble is, the suckers do.

Your programmer can also become very successful; he will be able to demand a considerably higher rate once he has been associated with a hit or two. He will also have the opportunity of getting a cut in the publishing of the songs where his creative input has been above and beyond the call of a session fee. They seem to develop the uncanny

knack of suggesting alternative or additional chord structures, guaranteeing them, in law, their fair share of the publishing action.

We would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the studio, the engineer and the programmer we use.

The studio is called The Village, and it is stuck on an industrial estate in Dagenham between a printers and a carpenter's shop. Whatever we might say about Dagenham would do a disservice to the people who live there. As there are no entertaining distractions in the place it inspires hard work. Dagenham seems to breed a variety of dope-smoking soul boys addicted to putting highlights in their badly cut hair. The older males have a constant need to be funny and talk about the price of second-hand cars.

Our engineer, Ian Richardson, is probably a genius. Is probably very funny. Will take down his trousers at the minimum of provocation. Has blonde highlights in his hair and has an earring in the wrong ear. Finds it impossible to talk to girls without at least proposing marriage. He is a vegetarian and a violent anti-smoker. He drives second-hand Jags and is always rereading a book about the Kray Twins. He plays drums in the Rubettes.

Our programmer, Nick Coler, is a genius. He can play on the piano every piece of music ever written, his left hand a blur of fumbled bass notes, while his spectacles slide down his perspiring nose. His cathedral choir-boy sense of fun has never left him and he sports a line of strange hand-knitted jumpers. Is continually trying out new haircuts. Drives second-hand Audis. He plays keyboards with the Rubettes.

Without them, these two would like to think we would

be nowhere. We like to think, not only would we not have to suffer the A13 Dagenese and twenty-four-hour joke sessions, but we would have not seen our career take such turns for the dire.

Tony Atkins, who owns the studio, means well. He is lost somewhere between forty and fifty, but is fitter than all of us. Had a minor hit in the sixties with a band called Spectrum. Made a living out of producing Euro Disco. Has to talk to his bank manager a lot. Is very understanding when we haven't got the cash. Drives a second-hand Jag and knows all the members of the Rubettes. The other regular clients at The Village are Chris Barber and Freddie Starr.

We would like to go on record as saying if you live 'out East' and you want a smash, get down to The Village. If that doesn't get us some free time, the rest will have to be told.

While the engineer and programmer are hard at it (and make sure they constantly are) you have to get acclimatised to the fact that you now have an office for a week. There will be phones you can use, possibly a fax, telex and photocopying machines, and hopefully a pool table to practise your shots and relieve studio fatigue. If it's a studio that makes you pay for every game, don't forget to stuff up the holes with newspaper. If your Music Week directory has not arrived yet you will be able to use theirs. As well as having your record recorded between Monday and Friday you have to make all the arrangements and appointments for your visit to London the following week.

You are going to have to get yourself a plugger, an accountant, a solicitor, a manufacturer, and a distributor

for your record. The solicitor comes first. Get talking to the studio owner or manager. Tell them what you are up to and seek their advice. They should be able to recommend a solicitor and an accountant for you. They have to be ones that specialise in the music business; it's no good using some local chappie, no matter how confident they might seem. Get the owner or manager talking about independent pluggers and publicists; they might know nothing but they might know loads. Every studio in the land has tried their hand at putting out records on their own little labels. Most fail dismally. A strange fact that we do not fully understand is, although local studios are in the best position possible to become aware of young raw local talent and have them tied up in a maze of legally binding contracts before they have recorded their first Peel session, for some reason they always miss the boat. We suppose this must be a good thing. There have to be hundreds of studio owners in the country kicking themselves at the memory of the impressionable would-be megastars willing to sign their names to anything on the off-chance it may give them a bite of the apple. The owner somehow lets them slip through his net on their way to fame, fortune and back tax payments. But that's not your problem.

Your problem is getting some mate or relative that is now living in London (that's if you don't already live thereabouts) to put you up for a few days. Telephone the solicitor and the accountant and make appointments. Tell them on the phone what your situation is, that you have got this 'hot' track, but have no money and you need representation.

Music business solicitors and accountants are in a very

competitive game. They will be willing to listen to you and give you advice – not so much free of charge but on the understanding that if things begin to happen and money comes in, they start to get paid. They don't want to miss out on what could be a future mega account earning their practice hundreds of thousands a year. It's a well-acknowledged fact that every aspiring superstar needs legal representation before they earn a bean.

Manufacturing and distribution. Without these two you will not have records made (finished product) or an organisation to get them out to the record counters across the land. There are a number of independent manufacturers of records in the south east. If you went directly to them they would want money you have not got up front before they do a thing. Then treat you like crap. Manufacturers deal with hundreds of small-time one-off labels, local bands wanting to press up five hundred copies of their records to impress their unimpressed girlfriends or schools pressing up limited-quantity LPs of their choir or brass band. They will see you as one of these. The only people that have any clout with these manufacturers are the major record companies, who will use independent record manufacturers when their own plants are working to over-capacity and they need to farm out work. Or the larger established indie labels that provide a steady flow of reliable business. Even then the pressing plants will lie to them and generally screw up and pass the buck. The reason for this is not because they attract the worst kinds of mankind to work for them but because there are not enough pressing plants to meet the demand. A ludicrous situation that we are surprised that some enterprising moneyed individuals have not put to rights. A pressing plant somewhere in the north

of England would clean up. This situation has been arrived at because WEA centralised their European operations sometime in the early eighties at the height of the recession and closed down their British pressing plant. The Polygram group of companies did the same last year. Now both of these companies have begun farming out much of their work to the remaining independent manufacturers.

What you are going to need is a distributor that will handle your manufacturing as well. The three main independent distributors in the UK at the time of writing are Pinnacle, Spartan and the Cartel. Both Pinnacle and Spartan are based in the south-east and both have a healthy CV of numerous past hits. The Cartel is, as the name implies, a group of independent distributors across the country who work in conjunction with each other, providing a solid network of distribution without stepping on each other's toes. We are distributed by the Cartel.

One thing that the Cartel has that might be favourable for yourselves, is that each of the separate distributors that make up the Cartel are able to take on a record or label to manufacture and distribute themselves, and the rest of the Cartel is obliged to distribute it. If there is one of these members of the Cartel near where you live you should make an appointment to see them first. If they were to handle your manufacturing and distribution you would be able to keep in far closer contact with what's going on. Also, Rough Trade distribution, who are the south-east's member of the Cartel, are over-loaded. In the first seven months of 1988 they alone had four Number Ones. All the other members of the Cartel are hungry to prove they can do just as well. The companies that make up the Cartel are:

Fast Forward, Edinburgh
Red Rhino, York
Backs, Norwich
Revolver, Bristol
Nine Mile, Warwick
Rough Trade, London

As always, you can get their telephone numbers from the *Music Week Directory*.

Have a chat with the people at the studio about it; see if they can make any introductions for you. Go out and put the kettle on, make some tea, and go and see how they are getting on in the control room. Try not to spend too much of your time actually in the control room as you need to be able to hear things afresh every time you go in. If you get too sucked into the actual crafting of the sounds you will lose the vital objective over-view of what is going on.

Don't smoke any dope or drink more than two pints in any one day all week. If the engineer or programmer starts smoking dope or drinking you are in serious trouble and will have to have it stamped out immediately. The vast majority of engineers are very professional and conscientious about this and do not indulge themselves on the job. The same goes for any other narcotics stronger than coffee.

Be ready for vast depression on Tuesday. Black clouds will gather and there is nothing you can do about it. After what seemed a promising start on Monday, when you first got over your nerves and realised things could be done, and people in fact took you seriously and carried out your suggestions. Tuesday will be Big Doubt City and nothing's going to change that. What stuff you have got down is

sounding like total crap. It's not just your paranoia that's telling you it's crap. It is crap.

There is no way out and you will have to plough on.

The cynic in you must, by now, be thinking, 'What are these dickhead Timelords on about? They haven't told us one concrete thing to do since we've been in the studio other than, "Leave it to the engineer and programmer!" If it was that easy, everybody would be having sodding Number Ones. This manual is a con. Just like all those "get rich quick", and "keep young and beautiful" books. Just another part of the late eighties sham. The fag end of Thatcherism. Full of patronising prose and cheap metaphors. I mean, for God's sake, The Timelords! They've only had the one hit and that was pure fluke. A pair of ageing fakers and now they're trying to take the piss by writing this load of crap.'

We don't think we could argue our way out of the above other than to say that some time between mid-Tuesday evening and late Wednesday afternoon something will happen and everything will start to make sense again. The track will begin coming together. By Wednesday evening you will know you are on to a winner. There is nothing more that we can tell you, even if we were there with you in the studio. Just hold on to your fantasy. Roll around on the floor and scream if need be, because it's all too late now. Ideas will come out of you that you never thought were there: just let them flow. Don't get too ahead of the game. Don't get carried away thinking your record is going to change the face of pop music.

Watch desperation bear fruit, and keep making cups of tea for the team. Every second of the track has got to grab your attention and never let go. Always go for the hookiest

hook, the lowest common denominator, the one you can't believe you're using. Take it and shake it and cry when you hear it.

'It's going to be a monster!' somebody will say. It could be you, but whoever said it, you know they are speaking the truth. A week ago there was nothing: just you, the dole and the rent in arrears – and now this.

Don't work later than midnight, however well the track is going. Everybody's brain begins to work on half capacity even though at the time it is telling you different. You will just end up paying for a lot of studio time that was badly used. Obviously, this temptation might not arise if you are having to use public transport to get home.

Thursday morning. Everybody at the studio will be becoming aware of the track's possibilities. Have a talk with them all about mixing on an ssl desk. If the studio complex you are using has not got ssl facilities they will tend to think they are not really necessary. They are. If they have got ssl, fine, you will be able to mix it there. If not, take their advice on choosing another studio that has. See if you can get them to book the other studio for you. They should be able to cut a better deal with them than you can. You will need to book two days: one for the 7-inch and one for the 12-inch mix. It will seem to be a phenomenal amount of money to be shelling out for something that others might be advising you you don't need. Make sure you give yourself at least a week between finishing the recording and starting the mixing. A lot has to be done in that time. Your mind has to settle before going in for the final mix.

The sticky subject of money – and the lack of it – should be dealt with about now. As we said earlier in the bit about

booking studios, they will want you to pay up before taking the tapes away. See if you can talk to the studio owner directly – preferably alone. Tell him how you are obviously working on a very limited budget and now that it would seem that everybody is in agreement you have the makings of a smash it would be totally stupid not to take the logical steps and have the tracks properly mixed. He is bound to agree with you. Tell him if you were to pay them their bill at the end of the week you would not have the finances to take the project any further, and ask to be given a twenty-eight day invoice to settle up. If he doesn't agree to this he will be a total sponge brain. If need be, remind him how major record companies take at least three months to settle their accounts, but as he will now be wanting your record to happen as much as you do, we are convinced that he will see sense in granting your request. Another problem might arise here, where you are going to have to use all your tact to tiptoe through and get out of with everybody still on your side: the studio owner might come up with some ideas in the way of help he can offer you. Naturally, as a business man he is going to want to see if there is any way that he can get involved with what you are doing that could profitably be turned to his advantage. His instincts will already be telling him you are somebody on the way up. He won't be too sure in what way, but he would like to be there when the cake gets cut.

The three possibilities he could offer you are: one, assign the copyright to his publishing company; two, let them put the track out on their own indie label; three, let him shop the track around the majors for you. He will indicate that he knows a few A&R men and drop names of people with whom he has contact at the various compa-

nies. It could also be some concoction of the three.

On the first one, publishing, this is the one area that you might be able to make some real money from the whole venture. To give that away now for nothing when your hand is at its weakest is at the very least a shame.

To put the record out on the studio's own label would be to assign yourself to the terminally unhip. Now we know being unhip has nothing to do with chart potential, but the hackneyed graphics and the memory of previous releases on the label will all count against you when your record is out there needing all the bonus points it can get.

The third suggestion, that he shop the track around for you. The reason why this route is definitely not to be taken is that, although he does undoubtedly know the said A&R men, it will never happen. Your track will just become one of a thousand cassettes lost somewhere between telephone calls, lunches, meetings and gigs in the expense account world of the successful A&R man. Even if he were able to get a deal for the track worth a couple of grand advance, that money would instantly be swallowed up in the recording costs incurred. Your track would also be way down the priority list of the major record company, whose main job is establishing and sustaining their international mega acts. Your record would be seen as some cheap acquisition; if it happens, all well and groovy for them, but nothing more than 'better than a poke in the eye'.

The trouble is, any one of these propositions could be the instant answer to all your prayers. Your burdens transferred in exchange for one of these three, the studio will waive its fee or at least put it down as a recoupable cost to be accounted for at some unstated date in the future. Your ego will be flattered that somebody 'in authority' is taking

what you are doing as a serious proposition. But please, we beseech you to hold out on all three counts. Giving in on the second or third will definitely consign you to never making Number One. The first could certainly lessen the chances and, as we stated above, doesn't make financial sense. Remember at all times, even if the studio owner has no direct stake in your record, he will want to see it do well for the sake of the studio's credibility.

The one late eighties exception to the above that we can think of is the Fon set-up in Sheffield. Through that studio have come two of the big hits in the previous twelve months (from writing): 'House Arrest' and 'Funky Worm', with groovy graphics and sounds that are hip to the beat in the very month of release. Both of which the Fon boss, Amrik, has licensed to majors.

Tell the studio boss you want to get the track finished before you make any decisions, and then you would not do anything without first seeking the advice of your solicitor. It might not be what he would like to hear from you, but he will respect you all the more for it.

Now that's sorted out, back into the studio. Backing singers, wild and weird samples, events you never planned, whole new directions, these sort of things will be happening now.

Friday. Daytime. This is your last chance to make whatever arrangements will have to be made for your week in London. Friday evening. Get a 7-inch rough mix of the track done. Leave the building that night with at least half a dozen cassettes of it.

You will feel good.

At home over the weekend you will play the track constantly. You will be beside yourself with confidence.

LONDON

Monday morning. A rain-drenched hitch, an Intercity Saver, motorway mayhem with the added bonus of contraflow hold-ups. Whatever way you get there, London is still a big city. The pavements paved with gold are heavily disguised and the legions of winos prick your conscience, outrage your sense of social justice, and remind you of what the future has in store for you. You pass them by on the other side and go for coffee in some Italian cafe. You buy a copy of *The Face*, just in case.

Solicitors. We spoke a little of them earlier on. The quote, 'Don't move without first checking with your solicitor', is the fastest way of making him a very rich man. But definitely, 'Do not go a block without first giving him a call', is true.

From now on in you will be asked to sign various agreements, side letters and amendments. Don't sign any of them without your solicitor first reading it through, and take account of his advice. The trouble is, solicitors become addictive. He will be the one person in London who will always be on your side and see your point of view. Talking to him will give you a sense of warmth and comfort – just like heroin. But remember, his services will cost you at least £50 per hour, even if it's on the pay-later scheme.

Things to watch out for with solicitors. Young ones are often eager and angry men. They were wimps at school and now, with all their learning behind them, they are out to show the world what they knew all along. They will hint at the fortunes to be had. They will throw their hands up in horror at the undotted 'i's and uncrossed 't's in proposed contracts. 'Whoever drew up this contract hasn't got a clue!' is a favourite expression. This young, eager, go-getting type might seem to be the one you feel you can relate to in some way. Be warned. He is as likely to lead you into deep water or scare off potential offers. Our advice would be to go with the slightly more mature solicitor. The wiser one. The one who knows how people's hearts and minds work, not just the sub-clauses and bottom lines. No matter if he isn't concerned about hearing your track, as long as he will listen to the way you want to do things.

Ask him to explain what the following things mean: points, percentages, copyright, publishing, on ninety, PRs, MCPS, PPL, VPL, BPI, MU, and territories. Ask him to sort out your membership of what you (or your record label) need to become a member of. Tell him the name of the accountant that the studio owner has recommended. See if he knows him. Who would he recommend?

The accountant should be your next appointment. Much of what has been said about solicitors applies to accountants.

He will recommend you register for VAT. He will tell you to keep your receipts (even those you get when you buy a newspaper or a cup of coffee). Listen and learn. It will make no sense. He will show you petty-cash books with empty columns waiting for figures. His world will seem

incredibly important to him. To you it will look meaningless and have little to do with the reality of people going into shops in their thousands to buy your record. If you are not willing to accept that his world is important you could find yourself in five months time, after all the glory of having a Number One single has blown away down the gutter with the MacDonalds' wrappers and squashed Diet Coke cans, left owing what seems like the whole world hundreds of thousands of pounds that you never saw in the first place. Judge neither the solicitor nor the accountant by the cut of their suits or the decor of their offices, and don't be embarrassed by the framed photos of their families that they will have about the place.

Time to move on.

Other things to be done this week. Get your distribution and manufacturing sorted out. You should have made your appointment when you were at the studio. If it was a localish distributor you were going to try (one of the members of the Cartel), you should have gone to see them before you headed down/up to London.

Distributors, if they are interested (after they hear your rough mix they cannot afford not to be), will want you to sign a contract giving them exclusive rights to distribute your label's product for a minimum of one year. They will also want to take about thirty per cent commission from what they get for selling the records to the retailers. Try and get that figure reduced to below thirty per cent. Don't let them have any more than that.

To get them to handle the manufacturing as well might take a little more persuasion, but they will see the logic if the track is to stand any chance of being a hit. In no way could you alone have the clout with the pressing plants,

and it is in their interest that the record does as well as possible. Of course they will have accounts with the pressing plants and you will not have to front the money to have your record pressed. This will be deducted from your royalties, along with their distribution percentage and further small percentage for organising the manufacturing.

Our experience was with Rough Trade. When we went to them with our first record on RLF they didn't want to know. They saw it as something that might sell five hundred copies, the bulk of those going to unsuspecting export accounts. This record then received good reviews in the rock press so they agreed to distribute it. It was not until we were about to record our second LP that they considered it worth their while to handle the manufacturing as well. In your situation, time cannot be wasted like this. You have got to get in there and have them committed. The thing that you have in your favour that we didn't when we started back in early 1987, is that then nobody was expecting hits to be coming from nowhere. Now they can come from anywhere. They are on their guard and waiting. Get them to send their proposed agreement to your solicitor.

The other things you can talk to them about are pluggers, release schedules, sleeves, sales forces, and club promotion. On all these topics they will have useful things to say and will actively be very helpful.

Although you want to get your record out as soon as possible, to release it at the wrong time of year can totally destroy its chart potential. No point in releasing it in November or December; it would be lost in the deluge of the heavy-weight and seasonal releases. Distributors also have to take account of what other releases they will have

coming up. You will want to make sure it has their full force and support behind it. There is no point in competing with their other priority releases.

Artwork, sleeves and labels. We are sure you have a lot of ideas about that already. It will be no good getting some mate to do it because he's good at drawing. Both artwork for the sleeves and labels must be set out professionally for the printers to make any sense of it and do the job properly. The distributor should recommend a graphic artist for you to meet up with. Use their phones and make an appointment to see him as soon as you can.

Pluggers. They should be able to recommend at least one for you. Angela, who became our label manager at Rough Trade, recommended we talk to a strange American man called Scott Piering, who runs the outfit 'Appearing Music & Media Management'. It might have been a mistake but we took him on. You must have a meeting with at least one plugger by the end of this week.

Sales forces. Both tricky and very expensive, but you won't have to talk to any until you have your track completed. We will tell you all about them later.

The same goes for club promotion.

Who knows what difference a sleeve for a single makes? Go into a record shop, look at what the Top Twenty has for sleeves – pretty much of a nothing when you see them all in their racks. People worry over graphics. They bleed over them. They devote their lives to them. The graphics that a band use go a long way into building up the 'attitude' their would-be following can relate to.

You don't need any of that. Just make sure that it's bright and colourful, and that the name of the song and the act jump out of the front cover. No great concepts. Just

good, clean, clear graphics. On the back cover you can stick in more in-depth information: credits, attempts at wit, that sort of thing. The label artwork should contain all the technical blurb that you can find on any record label. It might be worthwhile checking with your solicitor if you are unsure about any of it.

Don't bother using a photograph. They just mean trouble and involve expensive time-wasting photo sessions. Mind you, we used one to supposedly great effect, but it cost us a fortune.

Ninety-nine per cent of graphic artists are good blokes, even if you don't like the way they dress or the glasses that they wear. They will care about your sleeve, listen to what you have to say, and get the job done properly. Ask them to liaise with whoever is handling the manufacturing at your distributors about flap sizes and where camera ready artwork should be delivered. We are afraid this can cost you as much as £400 for a 7-inch and 12-inch sleeve. Tell them to keep the budget as tight as possible. His invoice, when he gets round to sending it to you, will be one that allows for twenty-eight days to pay.

Next. Your plugger. The man responsible for getting the nation to hear your record. From now on in, this man will undoubtedly be the most important person in the jigsaw. Without his faith, vision and understanding of the fastest lane in this particular rat race, you will be nowhere.

There are no more than half a dozen independent pluggers in London who are worth using at any one time. There is no point in us recommending any one or more of them as the plugger league table is always in a state of flux.

We went with Scott without talking to anyone else. We would like to refute what we said about him on the previ-

ous page; it was not a mistake. It was one of the great moves we made.

So go with the plugger that's got the faith, vision and understanding – indefinable qualities, but you will know within five minutes of meeting them if they have them. Top-grade bull is something else they should have. The plugger will try and explain what his job is. Each of them view their role differently, but all must be able to deliver the following:

1. Concrete advice on what has to be brought out on your record for him to be able to do his job.
2. Appointments with Radio One producers where he is able to get them to listen to your record under the most favourable light.
3. Advice and help in putting together a video that will be acceptable for children's television, and a lead on some of the hungry young video makers who are out there.
4. Willing to work twenty-four hours a day and be contactable in any one of those hours that you choose.

Nobody can make a person like a record that they would otherwise hate, but it is not good enough for a plugger to think he has completed his task in just getting a Radio One producer to hear your record. The plugger has to understand everything that goes to make up a Radio One producer's personality. Understand the pressure and the responsibilities he has within Broadcasting House and to the nation's listeners. Understand why he loathes the whole concept of pluggers, but at the same time finds certain ones likeable, even lovable. The larger record companies are able to spend fortunes on producers: picking up

restaurant tabs, taking them horse riding, power-boat racing, hang gliding, jet packing and getting involved in all kinds of other pranks and japes. All this buying of favours (even when engineered very subtly) generates a self loathing within the producer which will in turn find self expression in being redirected back at the plugger.

The law of diminishing returns always rules.

Being a plugger or a Radio One producer is a dangerous game to be in. It is one of the fastest ways of losing contact with whatever finer qualities your soul might have had. The sight of embarrassingly dressed middle-aged men racing around clutching 7-inch pieces of plastic desperately trying to convince each other that they contain something of historical importance, something that the Great British public need to hear, can be very sad.

Please. Listen to everything your plugger has to say. No matter what he looks like he should be the one person who should understand what is actually going on in the heart of the beast. Years of reading the *NME*, *Smash Hits*, and *Thrasher* will never ever give you an insight into the sickness of the human soul and the ways of pop that this man will have. If he doesn't have that insight – dump him.

Our man, Scott Piering, had all these qualities and more. He lives life on the edge of complete mental and physical breakdown. This finds expression in some strange ways: his car does most of the actual breaking down for him, thus enabling him to use mindless physical violence against it in an attempt to get it going again. Of course, it does not, but it is better than if he were to collapse in the middle of the road himself and proceed to beat his body with a lump hammer.

Scott has, what we would call, a cow's lick; a piece of

hair at the front that refuses to be combed in any sensible direction. When reaching any points of nervous excitement, Scott will find it necessary to attempt to quell the lick's wayward ways by constantly twiddling it and patting it down in a most desperate manner.

Next there is his bright purple jumper. His alternative flag to tastelessness. It makes Mark E. Smith's shirts look like pure Paul Smith. But strangest of all is *the chain*. This chain is worn tightly around his thick-set neck and there is some sort of implement attached to it that digs incessantly into his flesh. Although there are no visible running sores or flesh-wounds, this indulgence in open and unashamed masochism must serve some purpose. We never dared to ask. He also indulges himself in a temperament that would shame the best prima donnas.

Without him this book would have to be retitled 'How To Get To Number 47 – With A Certain Amount of Difficulty'.

The man is a true star.

Money and pluggers. They will want a lot, and when your record starts happening pluggers will want more. Scott wanted a thousand pounds to start working the record and then all sorts of bonuses related to our record reaching certain positions on the charts. We had to pay him five grand altogether once it had made Number One. He had a lot of costs and his team worked flat out for it, but we had to give him the first thousand the day of release. We had a couple of months to pay the other four. Anybody who can do it much cheaper won't be much good.

Like the blokes who own the studios, pluggers often have their fingers in other pies. They might want to get their sticky fingers in yours – so watch it.

Without having some sort of video, a plugger will be pretty restricted in what he can do for you as far as television goes. Even if videos don't get used for transmission they are very good for pluggers to send out to people and get them interested in your track. But more of videos when you have done the final mix.

Within their set-up independent pluggers usually have someone who handles press: A PRESS OFFICER. The up-market title for this person is A PUBLICIST. To put it bluntly, their job is to get as much acreage in all forms of printed media. Publicists have to understand journalists and editors in the way the plugger understands radio producers. The publicist's role in the success of this operation is secondary. Turning a well-planned strategy into a reality through the press can be the best way to build a career – but this is done over months and years. For the sort of run-away success you will be after, reviews in the music papers – bad or good – are meaningless; your vanity will be the only thing affected by them. Not appearing in certain publications is as important as appearing in others.

What you will need a publicist for is feeding the tabloids and teen mags with pictures, titbits and the odd silly quote once the record is zooming. He will also help in organising photo sessions and cutting deals with photographers and photographic studios.

Pluggers and publicists usually view each other with a certain amount of contempt. The publicist can represent an act who regularly makes the front covers of the rock press, while the plugger for the same act will not be able to get a sniff down at Radio One outside of the confines of the evening shows. The publicist will think the plugger is useless.

Or the reversal. Where a plugger has a client who has just had their second Number One, while the publicist can get no more than a half page in *Melody Maker*. The plugger thinks the publicist is useless.

There are countless obvious examples: Dinosaur Junior will never make the Breakfast Show and Rick Astley never make the cover of *Sounds*.

One of us has been involved with one publicist for nine years. It is this publicist who handles our stuff. His name is Mick Houghton (pronounced How-ton). He is a reformed drug fiend, a would-be crime writer, a cricket fanatic, and he also awaits the day the Grateful Dead will deliver a half-decent LP. He is a realist. Gives no bullshit. Represents a lot of acts who get loads of front covers but never get on the A List down at Radio One.

We know sod all about other publicists or how to judge them on first meeting them. So ask your plugger to recommend one if he hasn't already got one on the payroll.

Publicists want money as well. We paid Mick Houghton £1000 for doing our single. He will hate us saying this, but he gets a lot less than the plugger because he had a lot less overheads and had to put in a lot less man hours.

The tools of a publicist's trade are a telephone, a photocopying machine and a capacity to lie.

Friday. Take the weekend off and worry about all the wheels you have set in motion and all the invoices that will be winging their way to you over the next few weeks.

By the end of this, the third week, you should now have had meetings with solicitors, accountants, distributors, designers, pluggers and publicists. You should have confirmed and put into motion your relationship with each of them. Your solicitor should already be looking over the

proposed agreement from your distributor, getting your membership of various organisations organised, and clearances gained for whatever samples you have used in your track. The accountant should be applying for VAT registration and contacting your bank manager. You should be shagged out.

Friday afternoon. Contact the studio you have booked to mix your track and confirm everything is OK for the Monday and Tuesday of the following week. Make sure that the multi-track is going to be there on time. Have a chat with the engineer and make sure he has ordered any bits of outboard gear that he will be wanting to play with.

THE FOURTH WEEK

Monday morning. Mixing. It's one of those words that you hear all over the place from people who don't know what it means. If we have not told you before, mixing is taking what is on the multi-track tape, deciding which bits to use and in what order you want to use them, while enhancing all the sounds and making a load of decisions, then recording what's left on to a two-track, stereo master tape. This is what the record is cut from. This is almost what the world will hear.

'It's all in the mix!'

'It will be all right at the mix!'

is the sort of crap you will hear people saying. Mix Fear is a big thing with a lot of people; the final moment of truth. This is where, if you don't get it right first time, you have wasted two thousand pounds.

Spend the first day doing the 12-inch. Leave most of it to the engineer, throw in some ideas, play some records to him that give him some idea of where you think it should be going. Get back to boiling the kettle and brewing the tea.

When he gets the drum tracks up and has done some work on their sound, it has to be the most mind-numbing danceable thing you have ever heard. These drums alone

should sound like they could go on all night in a club and the floor would never be less than a writhing mess of flesh.

Take risks. Have him drop all sorts of things out and stick repeat echoes on everything. Don't stop the beat. Don't lose the beat. Don't mistreat the beat. If you have time to do another mix that is radically different, do it. Don't be afraid to have next to nothing in it. Worship at the feet of the primaeval goddess of Groove.

Edits. Get the engineer to try weird and wonderful edits with his razors. A good mixing engineer likes nothing better than to get lengths of tape stuck all over the place waiting to be edited back together again in some unlikely but glorious reincarnation.

The next day. Tuesday. The 7-inch mix. The attitude to mixing the 7-inch has to be a lot more controlled. We are afraid there is not the room for the wild creative gestures of the 12-inch mix, where the only constraints are that the physical and sexual elements of the track are left naked and the dancer should never be let free from the grip of the groove.

The 7-inch should very definitely be mixed using the small speakers in the studio. Don't get lost in the illusion of power that the big studio monitors will give any track. At all points hooks must be there screaming at the casual listener. Some ideas might have come up in the 12-inch mix that could be tried out in the 7-inch, especially for the breakdown section. Never forget, by the end of the day it has to all work in less than three minutes and thirty seconds.

If your track has vocals on it, make sure you do an identical instrumental version. This might be needed for overseas television shows. Make sure the studio keeps safety

copies of each mix you do. Have half a dozen cassettes copied, each containing all the mixes. They will be needed.

Wednesday. Take it easy. Have a lie-in. Check the post. Sign on if you have to. Take a stroll down to the shops and get some provisions in. The day will be overcast and grey; probably a spot of rain. If there is a test match going on England will be doing moderately well. A minor tragedy will have happened somewhere in the world: Metro crash in Paris, a fairground disaster at the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, that sort of thing.

It's time to play old records and reflect on the strangeness of life and wonder if that one-night-stand still remembers you. In the afternoon make some telephone calls. Chase up the artwork, check in with your solicitor, and do your laundry. Telephone the distributors and get them to book some cutting time for you at the cutting room of your mix engineer's choice. Go outside and watch a plane cross the sky. Wonder where it's going and about the lives of the people on board and why doesn't the plane just drop out of the sky and what you would do if it did.

Let Thursday be a similar sort of day to Wednesday (bar the minor tragedy). You will have to package and post cassettes of your record to your plugger, publicist and key person at the distributors.

Thursday evening. A cosy mild depression will settle in. Watch Top of the Pops. Read a music paper. Then let Friday roll by at its own speed.

On Saturday an aeroplane crashes minutes after take-off. When the black box is found will it reveal that you were to blame? Probably not.

THE FIFTH WEEK

The fifth week. The fifth week is another action-packed week. It's back down/up to London. Agreements to sign. The record to cut. Meet up with club promotion people and sales-force people.

Having a record cut means taking your master tape to a cutting room where a cutting engineer will play your tape, make some bizarre comments about its quality, then, using his machinery, will equalise the sounds coming off your tape (this has to be done because only sounds within a certain range can be committed to vinyl or broadcast by radio) before recording them on to a new tape of his. There is a tendency to make the sound more compact. The cutting engineer will then cut a Lacquer from this tape. A Lacquer is a metal disc, evenly coated in a black lacquer, that is placed on the most expensive record deck you will ever have seen.

To be honest, we are totally bored with telling you about cutting. Cutting records is boring. So are cutting rooms, and the bulk of cutting engineers are boring, with opinions totally irrelevant to what's going down. If we had our way we would quit writing the bulk of the rest of this book now and just tell you how to smuggle people into the Top of the Pops studios, and call it a day. Just get the book printed as it is.

We will try and be reasonable and professional about this. But we want this book finished by the end of the week. We want to get on with what we are doing next. We have this new gear that is providing us with a lot of fun. There's at least half a dozen LPs and two films to make, an art exhibition and a ship we want to buy – all by the end of the year – and here we are wasting our time writing a book that will be completely redundant within twelve months. An obsolete artefact. It's only use being a bit of a social history that records the aspirations of a certain strata in British society in the late eighties. Nothing that any Sunday supplement advertisement could not already tell them. It's obvious that in a very short space of time the Japanese will have delivered the technology and then brought the price of it down so that you can do the whole thing at home. Then you will be able to sod off all that crap about going into studios.

We have been doing all this writing in a county library in an old English market town. The place is crammed with dirty great books. Loads of them with more than five hundred pages in. All written properly. People must have sweated for years to write some of these books and we can't be bothered with finishing this skimpy thing properly.

We found a book this morning. *A Dictionary of Similes*. Printed in 1917. Thought there might be something in it to spice up our writing style. Every page is a winner. We shall let it fall open. It's page two hundred and sixty five. MONEY TO MOTIONLESS and what do we read:

Monotonous as the dress of charity children. (Anon.)

Moody as a poet. (Thomas Shadwell)

Mope like birds that are changing feather. (Longfellow)

I am as mopish as if I were married and lived in a provincial town. (G. H. Lewis)

Moral as a peppermint. (Anon.)

Moral as a peppermint!

Moral as a peppermint?

Moral as a sodding peppermint???

Obviously the word peppermint had some unusual connotation back in 1917 that has been lost down through the intervening years.

Back in 1917, when peppermint was moral, there were no pluggers or sales forces helping to hype the week's hot new releases. You would be out there in the trenches knee-deep in death, scribbling whatever feeling you had left into some dog-eared notebook, and we would be writing:

'How To Become A Renowned War Poet – The Easy Way'

'Tommy this and Tommy that
And Tommy feels no pain
For it's over the top for Tommy
Where Tommy takes the blame
While Fritz the Hun feeds Fritz the cat
And Kaiser sits on throne
Then Fritz chats to Tommy boy
About his Fraulein back at home'

That's the one that took us to The Top, up there with Owen and Service, Sassoon and Graves.

'Cut the crap!' we hear you say. All right.

Your distributors will organise getting the Lacquer to the pressing plant. A few days later they will get some test pressings (TPs) back. You have to listen to them and say: 'That sounds OK by me.' They can then go ahead pressing up the initial quantities. Check over the finished artwork before it is sent off to the printers. As with the TP, a slick (sleeve proof) of the finished sleeve will be printed for you to pass judgment on before they go ahead with the rest of the run.

CLUB PROMOTION

Club promotion. There are companies that specialise in mailing out records to clubs. The clubs get the records for nothing and in return have to fill out reaction sheets, reporting back how each individual record is going down with their punters out on their dance floor.

Lots of records are initially broken on the dance floor. It's all a cliché now, but it still works. A record is mailed out to the taste-making clubs four weeks before release as a white label or a fake American import (for DJ elitist credibility). Two weeks before release it gets mailed to the rest of the clubs and specialist dance-record shops. James Hamilton starts writing about the track in his *Record Mirror* column. On the week of release the record bombs into the national chart. This is how records you have never heard, by artists you have never heard of, are suddenly appearing in the Top 40.

We used a company called Rush Release and we would recommend them to anyone. They are based in South London. Find their telephone number in the *Music Week Directory*. Make an appointment. Get down there with a TP. Play it to them. Listen to their advice – and take it.

These promoters have various lists of clubs and DJs that are applicable for sending every type of record to. If they

think it's only worth your while sending out one hundred and fifty records they will tell you, even if by sending out three hundred they get twice as much money. For them to mail out three hundred records is going to cost you five hundred pounds (1988 rates). That's the amount we sent out for 'Doctorin' The Tardis'.

They will demand cash up front. They will tell you of the numerous times they have been let down by small companies who have gone bust owing them hundreds. Give them your hard luck story. Ask for a twenty eight day invoice and let them get on with their job. Inform your distributor that Rush Release are on your case and they need to have three hundred stickered white labels ASAP.

Organise your release schedule with your distributors. Make sure the plugger and publicist are supplied with white labels. Keep talking with everybody. Keep the vibe building. Don't be bullied into taking out adverts in any of the music papers; waste of time, waste of money. Keep using other people's telephones and don't take taxis. Don't stop thinking about videos, photo sessions and Top of the Pops performances. Hold hands with Heaven and take a tea break because things are beginning to get out of control again.

CHARTS

Have we told you how our national charts are compiled yet? The ones that the BBC use. The only ones that *Music Week* prints. The only charts in this country that are worth taking seriously. The market research people, Gallup, put them together.

There are six hundred record shops sprinkled across the country that are lucky enough to have little computers in them. Each time somebody buys a single from any one of these shops, the shop assistant is supposed to tap into the computer the catalogue number of the record sold. These are the CHART RETURN SHOPS. After the close of play on each Saturday evening and before the broadcasting of the new charts on Radio One on Sunday evening, Gallup will randomly choose two hundred or more from these six hundred shops, add up the score on their computers and with these figures create the chart.

The reason why these six hundred shops are so lucky (even though it is a bind having to type in catalogue numbers all the time) is because they become the focal point of all the record companies' in-store promotion. The record companies will stop at nothing to get the punter to buy the initial quantities of any would-be chart-bound releases from one of these shops. It is for this very reason

that fate has decreed that chart return shops have all the double packs, limited editions, gatefolds, 12-inch remixes, the shaped and picture discs, the CD singles and all the other loss leaders desperately trying to grab your attention from display boxes littered around counters and dangling from ceilings.

SALES FORCES

Each sales force is made up of a team of a dozen or more salesmen who each have their chunk of the kingdom to cover. Within their territory they have to call on each chart return shop once a week. From Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, armies of these salesmen tear from one chart return shop to another, giving away goodies, doing one-on-one deals, asking about the kids, leaving ten singles on the counter: 'Well, we'll forget about the invoice if it makes Number One.'

These are desperate men. Leading desperate lives. These men are in a league table and nobody wants to be left in the relegation zone. None wants to be back selling spark plugs. They want the glamour. They want to meet the stars. They want to be down there in London working in the record company's central office surrounded by all the dolly-bird secretaries. 'Make more room at the top - I'm on my way!' How can they fail? Chase that bonus. Make that sale. Crack that joke and 'Please! Just one more number in the computer and we're almost there!'

Over the Pennines and out across the Fens, winding up the Welsh valleys are estate cars piled high with boxes of the week's priority releases, all searching for the extra panel sale. These men have a job to do. Fair means or foul.

They are the foot soldiers and are out there week after week in the front line. They spend their lives waiting for exam results that are published every Sunday. Then there are the midweeks on Thursdays and predictions on Fridays and on and on it goes. Gallup provides the industry with midweek chart positions on Thursdays and predictions on Friday of what they think the charts will be like on Sunday. These are not published or broadcast for public consumption. It is they who get the chop when the whistle is blown and somebody shouts 'Unfair marketing!'. Yes, the record company gets fined, but they lose their job - and it's back to selling spark plugs.

Without such a team of men no record stands a chance of charting, no matter how much radio play or club action it's having. A distributor can only supply a demand, they don't go out there and sell, sell, sell.

Each of the major record companies has its sales force. We mentioned earlier that until a few years ago nobody outside of the majors had access to this form of weight. But now we have a number of independent sales forces that are breaking records from the independent sector at an almost monotonous rate. We should have made it clear that these independent sales forces do most of their work for the majors; they are hired to work on priority releases as a back-up, ensuring each chart return shop gets a visit twice a week by a salesman pushing the same record.

These men are not motivated by any altruistic ideals. They are a phenomenon of the Thatcher years. They are there for you to use and they will welcome working with you once they hear your record. There are three heavyweight sales forces you should contact: Impulse, Bullet,

and Platinum. They have all had Number Ones in 1988. Phone them up and see if you can get an appointment. Send them each a white label. Go with which ever one shows the most interest. We were in the lucky position of having all three wanting to work our record. Each of them uses different strategies, each offers different deals. They cost a lot of money. If they want five grand from you for working the life of a record, tell them it's got to be three grand. They will want chart bonuses just like the plugger. By the time you get to Number One you will be owing them ten grand. A lot of money, but it is what you have got to pay. There is no way around it. The great thing is they will all, when slightly pushed, let you do a deal where you don't have to pay until your money starts coming through from the distributors.

You might be wondering, 'Why do we have to pay these sales forces to sell our records? Why can't they just take a commission on the amount of records they sell?' When we said 'sell, sell, sell' earlier, it is not that straightforward. They are not out there really selling records: they are out there buying catalogue numbers going into computers, buying display space and rack visibility. They need tools. They need your help. They need free records to give away – thousands if you'll let them. Favours need to be won. Your real record sales only start happening once the record is off and running. That's when the vast bulk of orders start pouring in direct to the distributors.

Yeah, we know you must be bored hearing about salesmen but we have to hammer it home. These are the men that make the hits. Without them there would be nothing. Even if everybody stopped buying singles for a month there would still be numbers going into Gallup computers.

Still midweeks on Thursday and predictions on Friday and charts on Sunday. Nothing would change.

It is only these people who can push, pull or scrape a record from being at forty-one in the predictions on Friday and over the great divide and into the land of plenty at thirty-nine on Sunday evening. There, safe in the bosom of the Top of the Pops Top 40 chart run-down, the new entry plays on Radio One, the automatic national recognition. It's there – a hit for all to see. All because a few extra favours were pulled in Doncaster on a wet Friday afternoon.

We are not saying these men don't love music as much as the next man, they do; their in-car stereos are never left to cool. When they are working a record it doesn't matter if it's Glen Medeiros, Public Enemy, Fields of the Nephilim or Sabrina, they don't have the pretensions of the plugger or the crackable credibility of the publicist.

In the final analysis these are the men. Why should any shop waste their time pressing catalogue numbers into machines if it wasn't for the goodies that these men bring them for doing so? Without these numbers being tapped in there would be no charts.

Nothing.

The whole charade would not exist.

Do you get the picture?

Bonus or no bonus – that is the question.

COUNTDOWN

Release date is looming. The right clubs are playing your record. The plugger has already had a meeting with a very close friend up at Radio One. The publicist keeps telling you he's got to have some photos and some sort of biog. You know you need a video.

Those pay-up dates on the invoices are looming larger than the release date. They were adding up to £12,000 at the last count. You need to get your hands on twenty thousand pounds – fast. No muggable pensioner is carrying that much cash about with them and it's not as if borrowing a fiver from mum is going to make any difference. Enterprise Allowance Scheme? Why didn't you think of that before! Because you are not thick.

You are going to have to hold tight.

Check in with your solicitor. Check in with your accountant.

Start the countdown.

Sleep becomes erratic.

If you are a dope smoker you will find yourself skinning up before breakfast. You will almost have a nervous breakdown over the sleeve when you realise it is completely crap. 'Nobody would want to buy a record that looked like that!' and you will hear yourself sob:

'They'll just laugh at it and leave it in the racks.'

And: 'Why does the world need this record?'

We offer you no answers.

'Any record?'

Still no answer.

'The mix is crap. It needs a remix. Should I stop everything now, have all the copies that are already pressed destroyed and remix?'

No.

The plugger is screaming at you for a video.

'Let me back in the womb.'

Three. Two. One. Oh no! Here we go – ZERO!

Monday morning. Ten thirty and you are still in bed. There are record shops all over the country already open with your record in them. Is there anybody out there who has actually gone out and bought it? Why should they?

You switch on Radio One. You almost explode. They're playing it – Simon Bates is playing your record!

'Oh my God! Oh my God, why? why? why?' screams a voice inside your head.

It sounds crap one second and brilliant the next.

You start to shake. The telephone rings. You hide under the covers. The telephone stops ringing.

Simon Bates starts talking over the fade. 'The bastard.'

What does he say?

He likes it. Thinks it could be a chart-bound sound and tells a few million people they will be hearing that one again. The telephone rings. It's your plugger asking if you heard it; he thought it sounded great. He tells you it has been scripted for the Gary Davis Show that afternoon. He tells you he had been trying to get you over the weekend to let you know that the record has been put on the C LIST.

PLAYLISTS

Radio One operates a playlist system. All the producers meet on a Monday, listen to the new releases, and discuss which ones should go on or come off their playlist. The playlist is divided into A, B and C Lists. Records on the A List are the ones that get played on what seems like every day-time show, but in reality rarely more than twenty times a week. B-Listed records are ones that the producers are recommended to script in the shows; these can end up getting as many as fourteen plays in a week, more than many A-Listed records. A record on the C List is one that can be considered for scripting; more down to the individual producer or DJ.

And of course Radio One has its usual quota of Golden Oldies, album track spots and request slots that take a fair chunk of the day's needle time. The fact that your record may not have gone straight on the A List should not bother you unduly. Our record spent only one week on the A List – the week we were at Number One. When we entered at Number 22 we were not even on the C List. Other records can go straight on the A List, get played to death and still do nothing chart-wise.

In the life of most Number One records all this radio play and playlist stuff would have been off and running at

least a week earlier, but because you are not a name act, a heavy-weight record label (or even a slim trim indie with a good track record) nobody up at Radio One is taking your record that seriously – even though they like it.

The telephone rings again. It's some mate or your mother (or cousin) phoning to tell you that they've heard the record.

You get dressed and don't know what to do with yourself.

No milk in the fridge.

For the next few days you will be scared to call anyone and no one will call you. On Wednesday you will probably be tempted to go down to the local newsagents to see if any of the music papers are in and, if so, have they reviewed your record.

Probably only one of them will have a review and that just a couple of lines lumped in with three other records two thirds down the page; nothing that positive, but not too negative, just stating that it's more of the same and where will it all end. Don't try and read any significance into these meagre words. The reviewer will have forgotten what they said seconds after their hands finished typing it. You, however, may carry those words around with you in your head for the rest of your life – don't let that be a problem.

Wednesday. Late afternoon. Call the sales force. They should have a fair idea of how it's going by now. It will be going well, it's already starting to fly. They want to know about radio play and have you made a video yet. Call the distributors. Orders are beginning to come in.

'All the signs are there – it's going to be a big one!' They were telling you this last week and the week before and they are telling it to you again.

Call the plugger's office. He won't be there but his assistant will tell you they have already had five plays this week so far. It's going to be on 'Singled Out' on Friday. They are expecting about ten to twelve plays by the end of the week. 'It's going to be a big one!' she will tell you. The plugger will want to call you back later in the afternoon. He does.

'We gotta have a video. Look, this record could be huge. Without a video we're looking at a record that will peak at twenty-eight – if we're lucky. And have you sorted out what kind of performance you'll be doing for Top of the Pops? All the signs are this record could enter The Forty on Sunday. If the predictions on Friday confirm it I've got to tell the Pops' production meeting on Friday what your act is all about. They'll need to see there's a video, know that it's MU cleared.'

He will go on and on. You will have to come clean and tell him you may have the greatest ideas in the world but no money. Nothing. You can't conjure up a video out of thin air.

He won't like to hear this because you already owe him a thousand pounds that he should have got before last Monday. He will ask you if you have asked for any sort of cash advance from the distributors yet. You answer no. He will advise you to do that. They are bound to let you have it, seeing as the record is all ready to explode.

Call the distributors before they sod off home. They will know all about the radio play and the reaction from the sales force. Get straight to the point: you need money to see this thing through properly.

'How much?'

'Twenty thousand pounds.'

They will understand your situation and ask you to call

back in the morning. You call back the next morning just after 10am. (This, by the way, is the only [probably] long-distance call in the whole exercise that you need to make during peak rate with you having to pay for it.) They agree to give it to you.

Call your bank manager. Tell him what is happening. Tell him you want to draw out two hundred pounds now. He will say yes. Go to the bank and draw out the cash. This money is not needed for any instant purpose, but if you are going to be given a cheque for twenty thousand pounds you want to feel some of it there in your pocket – now.

Get down (or up) to London as fast as you can. You have to get that cheque into a bank before 3.30. If you have time, go to a cafe by yourself and have a coffee and just look at the noughts on that cheque.

After the bank, get round to your plugger's to talk video with him. It could already be too late. You should really have had a finished video over a week ago. You are going to have to have yours done by the following Thursday. That is shot, edited, dubbed, union-cleared – the lot – and ready for transmission.

Call your accountant. Tell him about the money. Get him to issue cheques to settle all your outstanding bills.

You will now once again feel like a free man.

We have to take a break here because we hate video. As a medium it stinks. It is almost totally out of your control and it costs a fortune. Video production companies are full of the people you never want to meet. They are leeches. Spending their lives trying to ingratiate themselves with anyone who they think might have a few grand to spend.

Videos are the disease of our time; adverts pretending to be art, made by arseholes pretending to be artists. Of

course, the lovers of kitsch in the next century will adore them, social historians dissect them. Shoot the lot we say.

Other than that, spend no more than ten thousand pounds (and don't forget the VAT). Don't make a prat of yourself and don't attempt a pastiche of some movie genre.

For our video we were lucky. We had a mate who had a director's ticket. He was not a regular video director. We had a lot of fun making it. Although it did not look like it, it cost us over eight thousand pounds, most of which went on hiring the helicopter for the aerial shots.

Listen to what your plugger has to say on the subject. Let his office be the centre of operations for getting it all together. Make decisions and get it done. Who knows? You might even enjoy it.

Next.

What's your angle?

What's going to happen on Top of the Pops? What are you going to say on Newsbeat? What are you going to use for photos for *Smash Hits*?

Like the video, you have left it all too late, but there was nothing you could have done about that because it's only now that you have got the money.

In this whole area we went well overboard, spending a lot of money that we could have saved for other things. We had radically different concepts each and every new day, each more complicated than the previous, each just adding to the confusion. We thought we were being clever. We were being twats.

An after-the-fact fact that became clear to us was that our record could have been sold in brown paper bags with no wacky 'car makes record' scam and it would still have got to number one. The record was bigger than all of us. It

knew where it had to get to. Us? We just tried to keep up with it, hoping people would notice our crazy asides and metaphysical jibes as the whole thing fire-balled itself to The Top.

The 'car makes record' thing was all very last minute, and we won't go into what other ideas we had before and how it all came about. Our engineer became the car. He was christened Ford Timelord. It could have been Timmy Timelord or Tyrone Timelord. He did all the interviews, providing a character that was an extension of his own. This left us free to just watch and assess. When it came to Top of the Pops we went through a myriad of mind-blowing scenarios for our performance. When we first came up with our car-as-front-man idea we just wanted to have the car sitting there in the Top of the Pops studio, our track playing and nothing else happening - all very Andy Warhol. 'Boring,' we were told. So we got a choreographer and four dancing girls and put them on a retainer for a month. That cost two thousand five hundred pounds. Called them the Escorts. Had a stylist make them costumes. That cost one thousand pounds. Then we did a photo session with them. That was another one thousand pounds.

The Escorts were like a latter-day Pan's People, who danced around Ford Timelord's more laid-back cool, and somewhat stationary performance. They provided fast fun and frolicsome sexuality. Tongue firmly in cheek for all to see; pure *Sunday Sport*.

We loved it.

Top of the Pops said: 'No way! If we want dancers on our show we'll provide them.'

It was some time around this point that we became aware of a resistance to our record and the whole way

we were promoting it. The tabloids, radio, and pop TV all smelt a rat. They thought we were attempting to take the piss, that we were trying to hijack their media for our own ends. That we were not playing the game according to the rules.

We thought we were giving them what they wanted: something inane, breezy, with a bit of safe silly sex thrown in.

The Sun and *The Mirror* took this especially badly. They inferred we were not only insulting them as journalists if we thought they would do an interview with a car, we were also told that if they were to run such an interview they would lose their credibility with their readers, who in future would begin to doubt all their other pop piffle stories about 'Bananarama Girl Splits With Sting' and 'Sultry Sade in Secret Affair With Bonking Mad Cliff'. Instead, they tried to expose us, the men behind the record. 'Who wants to read about reality?' we thought. 'Bill Drummond. Ageing rocker.' All that kind of stuff.

We thought they would want to do centre spreads with Ford Timelord with his lovely Escorts draped over his long, dark, sleek body. They did not. They hated it.

Don't make the mistakes we did. Save your money.

Mind you, things tend to get completely out of control – so even if you learn from our mistakes you will create plenty of your own.

Always find the positive angle. Always run the risk.

We originally wanted the record fronted by real Daleks. We could not get permission. It was after that we came up with our car idea. We then wanted to smash the car into Stonehenge or have a helicopter place it on two of the vertical stones whose horizontal was missing. We thought of

dragging it to the top of Silbury Hill, digging a hole and tipping the car in, nose first, with about four feet stuck in the ground and the rest stuck in the air, so that it looked like we had just arrived from outer space.

One of us is sort of related to one of the lesbians that abseiled into the House of Commons in early '88. They advised us against digging a hole in Silbury Hill as it is sort of special to them. This gang of anarchic lesbians said they would help us break into Stonehenge one night, paint all the stones black and white, knock a few over and remind the world about evolution. The girls were angry about something and we were not, so they went off and broke into News At Ten. Us, being boys, went off and made Daleks in true Blue Peter style. As these Daleks were so far removed from the original designs they did not infringe any copyright laws. Bill Butt, who was the director, attempted to pool together all our various strands of boyish behaviour, our love of shallow symbolism, heavy mysticism and American cars, and we made our video.

Confusion.

What has all this got to do with you and our supposedly concise instructions on how to make that last leap to pole position? Everything. Because it's only through mastering the art of having complete control when you are at the same time totally out of control. You must hold the reins tighter than you have ever held them before but let the chariot head over the cliff top. The abyss is calling.

Clutch at straws. Build castles on clay. Let the quick sand tell you lies. Take the scenic route. Be there on time. Use two drummers if need be. Fill out forms. Seconds. Minutes. Hours. Days. Midweeks and predictions. Fall, spin, turn and dive. Sign cheques. Solicitor doing deals with *Hits* and

Now. Sleep at night. Black to white. Highest new entry. Good to bad. Fast forward. Top of the Pops. Re-read this book, whatever it takes. No, don't. You already know all there is to know. Faster. Faster. Faster. Give everything. Just give everything. This is the beautiful end.

Sunday evening.

Five minutes to seven. You are now at Number One. This is forever. It is now totally out of your hands. Your body still looks the same but everything inside it is a million miles apart.

Sunday evening.

Twenty past seven. Rockman opens another bottle of Champagne. King Boy watches lapwings fly past the setting sun.

You do what you need to do. There was nothing behind the green door but an old piano. So why? What have you learnt? If you can have a Number One, anything is possible. Don't forget to sign on.

POSTSCRIPT

A couple of people have read through what we have written to check on the spelling and to see if we should be sticking in any more punctuation. They were disappointed with the way we ended it. We don't know what they expected, or what you expected. We certainly did not know what we expected. Maybe an attempt at metaphysical wit. 'Expect nothing, accept everything', something like that.

'It's all left up in the air. Out of focus. You never even told us how to smuggle people through the BBC security into Top of the Pops or about Gary Glitter. We want to know about Gary Glitter.' They said.

To be honest (or at least an attempt at it) we think the reason we wrote this manual was to try and understand the whole process ourselves, make sense, unravel the mess of confusing strands. All the lies and logic, morals and myths and the difference between 'yes' and 'no'.

Empiricals. Forget it.

Nothing ever resolves itself. You must know that by now. We just chose a cut-off point. No point in us telling you how we attempted staying at Number One for a further week and failed, or how Top of the Pops wouldn't let us go on with Gary Glitter the week we were at Number

One. Or how we wanted to swap our Number One with Morrissey's 'Everyday Is Like Sunday' and Gallup wouldn't have it. To quote the most heart-shuddering moment in teenage pop, the closing line in 'Past Present and Future' performed by the Shangri Las, written and produced by Shadow Morton, 'It will never never happen again.' If we do have empiricals, that line is it. We would never be allowed to get away with it a second time.

I am sure there are dozens more handy hints we could give you. You will have to give them to yourself instead. It's all obvious stuff.

'Public Enemy' bring out a record called 'Don't Believe The Hype'. A white UK rock journalist tells us they are the greatest rock band in the world. A lad on the tube is wearing a Public Enemy bomber jacket and Def Jam baseball cap. Must have cost him twenty quid. How deep does the irony have to go before we all drown? Time for tea.

We've had enough. Just show us where the door is. The White Room is calling.

Yours (empirically)
The Justified Ancients of MuMu

PS GOOD LUCK



AFTERWORD

IN PRAISE OF COUNCIL HOMES

Destination Dagenham Heathway, on the District Line. The green one, heading east, Essex bound. I've got a back-end-of-winter cold coming down and the weather is miserable; that's the way (uh huh, uh huh) I like it (uh huh, uh huh). Ten years ago to the very moment, I was sitting on this tube train heading for the Village Recorders studio to meet up with Jimmy Cauty and get to work on our new track. A track that grew into 'Doctorin' The Tardis' by an imaginary band called The Timelords. The record was released on our label, KLF Communications. It went to Number One in the UK. We never attempted a follow-up by The Timelords, but we did sit down and write a book: *The Manual (How To Have A Number One The Easy Way)*. We published the book ourselves. Printed 7000 copies, sold the lot, then got on with inventing The KLF.

Over the years the book became collectable, a cult item, sought after, bought and sold for vastly inflated prices. Now it had been proposed that a new edition of the book should be published. Would I be interested in writing a new postscript? My original copy had been lent and unreturned some time past, so I phoned Helter Skelter, the rock/pop bookshop. I felt like J. R. Hartley in that Yellow Pages ad, phoning up for his fly-fishing book.

'Have you got any copies of that book *The Manual*, about making a hit record?'

'You mean *The Manual (How To Have A Number One The Easy Way)*. Like gold dust, mate. We've got a waiting list for people who want that.'

'Can I go on the waiting list?'

'Not worth it mate, it's that long.'

'OK. Thanks anyway.'

So I wasn't going to get a copy that way. But it didn't half make me feel good to be told a book I had had a hand in writing was like gold dust. Better than having the 'Bad Wisdom' books in the remainder bins. My ex-wife lent me her copy and I photocopied it. I know that's a bit dodgy from a copyright point of view, but what could I do?

I've decided to reread this photocopied copy of *The Manual* while making my pilgrimage back to Village Recorders. I got on at Aldgate East and we are now overground, out of the tunnel. Bromley-by-Bow, Iain Sinclair territory. Over the muddy waters of the river Lea. The rising Dome glimpsed between the graffiti-emblazoned walls of a crumbling civilisation.

In 1987, Essex was the perfect place to create a Number One. The man on the Clapham omnibus was out of a job; if the media wanted to know what the common man thought, they headed for Essex to do their vox pops. Essex Man was in his prime. Mike Gating was captain of Essex and England. Maybe making the record in Essex was the real reason this record topped the charts, not all the stuff we wrote in *The Manual*. Pick the right county and you're away. Which reminds me, when are the Ordnance Survey going to publish their psychogeographical survey of these islands?

I open *The Manual* and start to read. 'Text by ... The Forever Ancients Liberation Loophole.' Now that's a name that Jimmy and I never got to use. It still feels we are holding back on it, keeping it in reserve for when things get totally out of control and we need to make a quick escape. As for the guarantee on the next page, not one person wrote in for it. Maybe people thought it was just a lie. The thing is, we went to the expense of printing up a load of these guarantees, expecting to be flooded with requests.

'Be ready to ride the big dipper of the mixed metaphor. Be ready to dip your hands in the lucky bag of life, gather the storm clouds of fantasy and anoint your own genius ...' What an opening couple of lines. Every book I'm ever involved with in the future should kick off with these lines. It sets you, the reader and the writer, up. It promises so much and it forces you, the writer, at least to try to deliver the goods. Plaistow, Upton Park, East Ham, Barking. I read on, all 78 pages in less than 45 minutes.

'We've had enough. Just show us where the door is. The White Room is waiting.' That's the closing line, not as good as the opening one. As for what lay in between, of course it wouldn't work, in one sense – totally arrogant of us to think that chart success was just down to some rigid, objective rules laid down by us, that anybody should be able to follow. When I was sixteen and read *Playpower* by Richard Neville, it made me feel that everything and anything could be achieved, that life was an adventure begging to be begun. I wanted *The Manual* to be the same. To be able to say to people, 'Don't be afraid. If you want to do something, just go ahead and do it, but be prepared to take the blame, to feel the fall. Don't sit around waiting to be asked, to be given permission. Just get out there and do it.'

Yes, I know it sounds like the blurb on the back of one of those American self-help-bollocks books. But it is a simple fact that every generation of artists needs to rediscover this; to smash the yoke of pop, art, literary history and have their very own Year Zero, their own small press revolution, their punk revolt and their Marcel Duchamp.

As well as genuinely wanting to demystify the pop process we wanted, in our arrogance, to elevate the one-hit-wonder novelty record to Art with a capital A, and to do this without anyone knowing but ourselves. We wanted to celebrate the most reviled member of the UK Top Twenty as it happened, and not wait twenty years for its kitsch value to be given credibility status.

Ever since that urinal got signed, generations of artists have wanted to appropriate and/or mimic the trashy and mass-produced. The patronising stance adopted by these artists towards the mass-produced has nearly always stopped them from being more than voyeurs and/or critics of the process, unable to produce work that is genuinely consumed by the mass market. Throughout the twentieth century some of us artists have been on the run, threatened and made to feel redundant by the mass-produced. As much as an artist might long to produce a work that is bought *en masse* by the proletariat, they are nearly always thwarted by their lack of craft or understanding of the market place. More debilitating than this is the artist's insecure need to be applauded by their own peer-group élite. A well-documented fact, this need for peer-group applause being our driving force and our undoing.

I don't think we believed that anybody would take the book literally, but a couple of blokes from Austria had a damn good try. Although they never had that UK Number

One, they did sell a couple of million records worldwide. Nobody has heard of them since. Jimmy and I had just finished writing *The Manual* when we were contacted by these two lads from Vienna who wanted to come over and have a chat with us. We said 'Fine.' They had an idea for a record using Austrian yodelling, break beats, Abba samples, lederhosen and loads of cleavage heaving out of Alpine period costumes. They wanted Jimmy and me to produce their concept for them. We said 'We don't need to, you can do it yourself,' handed them a copy of *The Manual* and sent them packing back to Austria. A few months later, 'Bring me Edelweiss' by Edelweiss climbed into the UK Top Ten, was Number One in six European countries and even went Top Five in the States. It was as bad a record as (or an even greater record than) our Timelords one, with the added bonus of a truly international appeal – and loads of that cleavage in the promotional video clip. (In my latest – but out of date – edition of *The Guinness Book of Hit Singles*, Edelweiss are wrongly attributed as coming from Switzerland. An easy mistake, with all that yodelling.)

Maybe the book's only current worth is as a period piece. So many of the supposed practical tips were of the moment, not golden rules as we stated. The reference points have passed into pop history. I mean, where is Bruno Brooks (and who would want to know), and whatever happened to Steve Wright's genius? Like all pop genius, by its very definition it never stays faithful to one individual for longer than Warhol's fifteen minutes. Then it finds another host brain to reward and torment, like a flea gaily hopping its way from head to head.

The tube pulls up to Dagenham Heathway. I take a deep

pull on the damp Essex marsh air. It feels good. It's about a mile and a half walk from here to the Village Recorders studio. This is the bit that I always liked best. Down past the Heathway parade of shops. Turn right by Mo's Fish Bar and Restaurant, into Reece Road. Post-war council housing. Forget timber-framed thatched cottages, this is England. Council estates on drizzly March days. It makes me feel safe and secure. This is where I belong, though fate intervened and took me away from the council estates of home. Tom Jones can keep his green green grass, I want that post-war grey Labour government pebbledash, where everybody has their own front and back garden to fill with stained mattresses, retired washing machines or pretty maids all in a row.

Of course, the great owner-occupier push of the '80s changed the way these houses look. All over the country, proud new owner-occupiers invested their castles with stone cladding, mock-Georgian front doors, leaded diamond windows, brass number plates and satellite dishes.

Now I'm not trying to indulge in some mock-Hoggart *Uses of Literacy* observations about our isles. No. This is all building up to a fact that somehow got missed out in the original edition of *The Manual*. Here goes: 97.5 per cent of all great British pop records have been created by individuals dreaming their teenage years away in fuggy box bedrooms on council estates somewhere off another bypass. Ask Julie Burchill, this is the sort of thing she knows about. From Billy Fury all the way through to Sporty Spice – council-house box bedrooms. Being stuck in a public school dormitory waiting for your weekly fix of the *NME* somehow doesn't quite do the trick. I almost believe this myself. I want to go and prove my randomly

invented percentage to be true, through exhaustive research. Phone Pete Frame – he's the sort of bloke who would know.

Turn left at Pondfield Road. Seagulls attack last night's fish supper, scattered across the road. A G-reg Ford Escort, fog lamps, sun screen, is up on bricks, its bachelor days over. Dagenham and Redbridge fcs ground. Dreaming of glory days in the Vauxhall Conference. Minor league football grounds are always far more romantic than their big brothers; so much more to play for on grey, lonely away days. There is something that links all this with our nation's consumption of hit single records, something about this has to be understood even if it can never be articulated.

So like we said in *The Manual*, we tried to pretend to ourselves that it was our early-'70s Ford Galaxy American cop car that masterminded the record. We gave him the name Ford Timelord. The only thing is, nobody believed us, even though with the help of some primitive technology we got him to do all the interviews. Top of the Pops wouldn't even let us bring him into the TV studio for our chart-topping performance.

When the record slipped from the Number One slot, we had a plan. We approached an off-Cork Street art gallery. We knew somebody who knew them. The plan was for us to paint two huge, life-sized portraits of Ford Timelord, one from each profile. The canvases would be about 15 feet by 7 feet. These two paintings would be hung on opposite sides of the gallery. In between them we would exhibit Ford Timelord himself. Then at the opening of the show, Jimmy, dressed in his black top hat, tails and cape, and I in my corresponding white ones would take our

angle grinders, cut Ford Timelord up and sell the bits to the art-buying guests.

Ever since Jim Reeves died I've had a fixation with the death of pop stars. I've always hated, resented and revelled in their instant deification and subsequent exploitation. This fascination has led to an unfocused fantasy that Colonel Tom Parker (Elvis's legendary manager) immediately after the death of the King had him cut up into a thousand pieces, each piece frozen then sold off secretly in million-dollar bite-sized chunks. There was/is something so much purer in this than all the crap repackaging of back catalogue, endless calendars and tacky merchandise. It seemed to reach deeper into the human psyche like the medieval market for the relics of saints.

The gallery owner seemed to be quite keen on our idea. He mentioned in passing that Bob Geldof had come into his gallery lately and bought a painting. He reckoned that pop stars were about ripe for getting into buying contemporary art. He wanted to know how many pop stars we knew that we could invite along, and were they likely to buy? Something about the idea began to smell. We had thought he was into it because it was great art. Maybe all he was interested in was tapping into the market of gullible pop stars wanting to buy their way up a cultural ladder.

He had another idea. He would stage the exhibition in an East End warehouse, and not in his off-Cork Street gallery. He told us about this scene that was beginning to happen around Whitechapel. A bunch of young British artists just out of college doing things like this. If our show was staged there it would give it the right context. We thought he just didn't rate our idea as good enough for his gallery, didn't want to tarnish his Mayfair reputation. We

didn't want to be lumped in with a bunch of no-hoper ex-art students in the East End. We had just had a Number One. We knew about corporate identity, commodification, logo is all, death sells, the common touch, ambivalent irony, contextualisation, appropriation. We knew about art. Wallowing in our naivete, we knew we were clever. (Obviously, not clever enough.) So we said Fuck Off. Or rather, we didn't say Fuck Off. Nothing as up front and tough lad as that. We just didn't do the show.

Instead, we decided to use all the money that was pouring in from our Timelords record to make a movie. It was to be a road movie with no dialogue. Just a soundtrack. We would screen the film in acid house clubs (it was 1988, remember). We would set up our machines at the other end of the room by the projector and play the soundtrack. We asked a friend, Bill Butt, to direct it. A crew who had just finished working on a Spielberg movie at Pinewood were drafted in, and we were off.

The film started at Trancentral, our South London HQ. Most of the rest was shot in the Sierra Nevada region of southern Spain, where all the spaghetti westerns were filmed. There were deserts, castles, dirt tracks, mountains, big big landscapes and even bigger skies. Jimmy, me and Ford Timelord on the road to oblivion. No script, no pre-conceived ideas, nobody to say No. Just a title. *The White Room*. When we got back to London and spent a day watching the rushes, we decided it was all a load of bollocks. The trouble was, by then we had written and were committed to recording the soundtrack to *The White Room*. In the fullness of time, the album came out and spawned a bagful of multi-million selling singles.

So why am I telling you all this, other than to brag about

what wonderful, rich and varied lives we lead? Because I want to emphasise how when you push your boat ... take that step into the ... and just say Yes, things happen. You may have no control over them. Let them be, let them spiral out there.

Ten years after we turned up our noses at putting our car-cutting show on in an East End warehouse so we could be seen as part of a sad scene of ex-art students, those same sad fuckers are the sexiest international art stars in the firmament.

Pondfield Road turns into Wantz Road and there is the Tip Top night club, though now it has changed its name to the Wantz Social Club. I remember once reading an article about the so-called Essex Girl phenomenon. The journalist wanted to find out what the young women of Essex thought of this much-discussed creature. He trekked out to the eastern wastelands for research. The female natives of Chelmsford, Southend, Billericay and Canvey Island said, 'It's not us, it's those tarts in Dagenham that give us a bad name.' The research continued to Dagenham, where the journalist found the local stonewash-denimmed, bleached blonde grown-out, white-stilettoed women, who said, 'No it's not us. It's that lot that go to the Tip Top night club down Wantz Road.' That is where the true Essex Girl is to be found.

Village Recorders studio is on a small industrial estate, the Midas Business Centre. Is it only now that I remember its name? Maybe you should forget all the revealing insights, handy hints and golden rules documented in *The Manual*. Maybe the fact that everything turned to gold was all down to working at the Midas Business Centre.

Village Recorders. Just another prefabricated unit on a

light industrial estate. Tony the studio owner's Jag is parked up outside, as it always was. He now has a newish-looking XJ Sport, still with the same personalised number plate. I go up to the door and peer through the rather odd stained-glass window they always had. There is a light on. I can hear people's voices. I can feel the thud of a bass drum. I don't knock. I could never stand all that 'So what have you been up to' stuff, I mean, where do you start? Do they want to hear the truth? Do I want to hear the truth? I turn around and walk away, whistling a tune that's been on my brain all day. The drizzle still tastes good at the back of my throat.

And you can forget all my self-effacing ramblings, because *The Manual* still stands as the only book that delivers the truth about having a UK Number One the easy way. There is still time for you to go out there and dip your hands in the lucky bag of life, to gather the storm clouds of fantasy and anoint your own genius.

Bill Drummond, 1998

also available

FROM THE SHORES OF LAKE PLACID

AND OTHER STORIES

Bill Drummond

Although triggered by a request to write the sleeve notes for an Echo and the Bunnymen greatest-hits package, this is not their story, nor the story of Bill Drummond's relationship with the band he managed between 1979 and the mid 1980s, nor a critical assessment of their work. It is an account of his obsession with Echo, the ghostly horned rabbit figure on the sleeve artwork for the band's first single that he identified with the protean, mythical figure of The Trickster.

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K FOUNDATION BURN A MILLION QUID

Chris Brook and Gimpo

In the early hours of 23 August 1994, in a boathouse on Jura, off the west coast of Scotland, the trustees of the K Foundation, Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond, burned the assets of the foundation – £1 million in £50 notes.

The money burning was filmed: a year later Cauty and Drummond returned to Jura to show the people of the island the film (*Watch the K Foundation Burn a Million Quid*) and to inaugurate a series of screenings and discussions held in various locations – all in an attempt to understand just what the K Foundation had done. Was it art? What was the morality of the burning? Was it a publicity stunt? What should they do next?

This book is a further exploration of the act, with stills from the film and a selection of the statements, letters and verbal responses of those attending the screenings.

'Destroying their material wealth, Drummond and Cauty threw down the gauntlet; perhaps the challenge is not to understand the act but to find an appropriate response.'

Phil Edwards, *Red Pepper*

'It is certainly thought provoking.'

Lord Archer

180 x 210 mm 252 pages

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