

HOUND DAWG

MAGAZINE

"I'M A HOUND DAWG!"

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RIK MAYALL SPECIAL

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE
LATE GREAT COMEDIAN AND ACTOR**

HOUND DAWG ISSUE 20

JUNE 2014

WISDOM TWINS BOOKS

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I'm very, very sad to hear of Rik Mayall's death. He was one of the UK's best ever comedians, up there with the greats; influential, shocking, anarchic, original, a fireball of energy, a force of nature and much more.

Although I wasn't a close friend or anything, I did have the honour of working closely with him when he narrated an audiobook of my novel *Cutey and the Sofaguard* and it was a real experience I can tell you. He put everything he had into that audiobook, for no money up front, bought me dinner every day (bananas and sandwiches), we'd have tea and cake in the café after each session (recording session I mean, not.... you know), we'd laugh and have jokes about things you just can't repeat in print. We stayed in touch for a while, he would call or text, we'd talk mucky filth with each other. I'll always have amazing memories of him as an actor, ripping into the script over those three days, dissecting every line, repeating every paragraph for me so I could choose the best take, not making me feel like I was in the presence of a star but a normal bloke doing a job. "See you at work tomorrow" he'd say as he went off home. A true pro and British icon.

RIP matey, or comrade as he used to call me...

THE PEOPLE'S POET

*A LOOK AT THE CAREER HIGHLIGHTS FROM A
LEGENDARY ACTOR*

Rik Mayall was one of the UK's biggest comedy stars of the 80s and 90s. He exploded on to our screens in the early 80s amidst the anarchic alternative comedy boom, with his partner in crime Adrian Edmondson. The Young Ones, Comic Strip Presents, The Dangerous Brothers on Saturday Live, Filthy Rich and Catflap and Bottom helped define the comedic landscape of the times and blah blah blah, this all sounds like a poncey Guardian article. The truth is, Rik Mayall was funny, ridiculously funny, fearless, wild and eccentric, a one-off, an original and the kind of performer we will never see again on mainstream TV. He was fearless, brought the rules down from the inside and spread manic joy wherever he went. The epic Bottom stage shows which had people rolling about with laughter, the under rated gem that is Guest House Paradiso, the classic Drop Dead Fred where Mayall played a punk haired imaginary friend to Phoebe Cates. There are so many magical moments preserved on screen and audio forever. Picking highlights is tough as there are so many, but I'll have a ruddy good try, as the man himself might have once said.



Kevin Turvey was unarguably the first time the nation got a full on look at Rik's talents. The simple minded but sweet "investigative journalist" dominated the early 80s series A Kick Up the Eighties and became one of Rik's earliest iconic roles. For me though, Turvey's golden moment came in the one off special The Man Behind the Green Door, when he took to the stage with Robbie Coltrane and Ade Edmondson to perform Downtown, a classic moment.

Another great track that my dad often played when I was a kid was Mayall's version of rock and roll classic Trouble, in full 'Wik' speech impediment mode. "I don't wipe my bottom when I go to the loo." "Look out you squares, I'm bloody mad!"

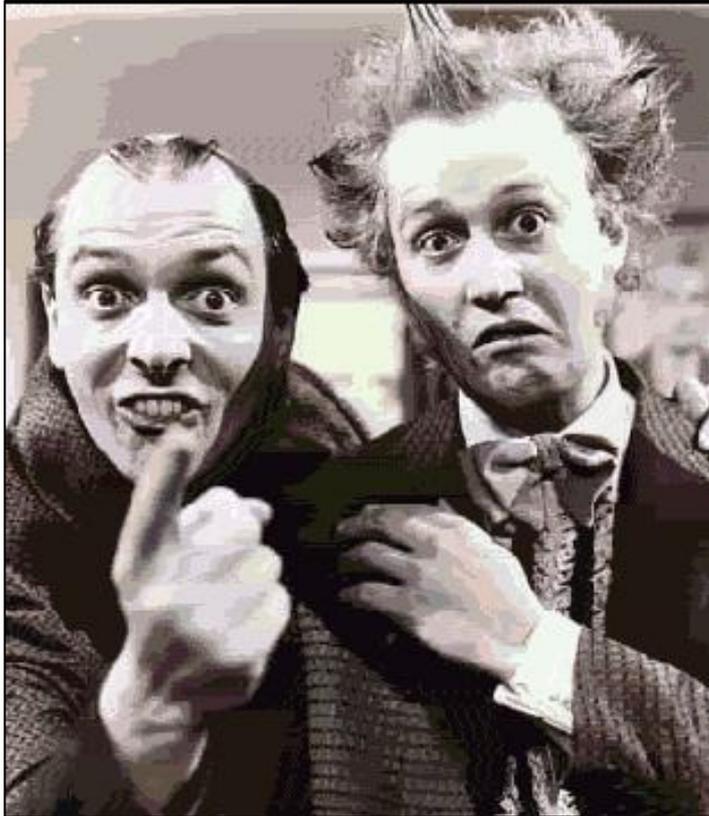
It was The Young Ones though that really catapulted him to fame, the classic cult series he co wrote with Lise Meyer and Ben Elton. The iconic show had him unforgettably hilarious as "people's poet" numpty Rik, putting up with his housemates punk Vivian, Mike the cool person and stinky but gentle hippy Neil. The series was a massive hit and is still as fresh and funny today as it was back in the 1980s. My personal favourite moment is when Rik puts on the stereo at the crappy party, asking "does anyone here like the Human League" before launching into a pathetic dance. It's only seconds before the cops break up the rubbish party and smash the record player. The Young Ones is endlessly quotable and definitely the show he will be most remembered by.

The 80s were full of other wonderful Rik moments. The Comic Strip Presents, another anarchic comedy series which tore up the rule book, started simultaneously as The Young Ones on Channel 4 and gave TV a new generation of talented comedians and actors, like French and Saunders, Keith Allen, Rik and Ade, Peter Richardson and loads more. Rik appeared in some cracking Comic Strip episodes. 1983's War was the first, a Mad Max style post nuclear war movie spoof. Rik played a few roles in it, as did the whole cast, but he



was great as the dim witted American general. "What's all this blue stuff?" he asks, pointing to a map of the world. "That's the sea general," replies Peter Richardson.

Rik was also memorable in one of the best of the early Comic Strip movies, The Beat Generation, a black and white send up of the beatnik poetry/jazz scene. Rik plays a suicidal mysterious loner. But the most famous of Rik's Comic Strip movies has to be Bad News and More Bad News, all about a terrible rock band who think they're the heaviest group going. Rik played Colin in it, a posing bass player who hid his pathetic true self



behind a black curly wig and lots of Kiss style tongue wagging. Rik also stood out in *Dirty Movie*, playing a proto type Richie character that ran a cinema and opened up on Sunday mornings just so he could watch

reels of bizarre porn on his own. He did slimy brilliantly.

A *Fistful of Traveller's Cheques* was another classic Comic Strip, a loose spoof of the spaghetti westerns with a colourful cast of characters. My favourite of the lot though has to be *Mr Jolly Lives Next Door*, a vile Bottom-esque comedy about two shitty escorts who rip off their clients and drink ridiculous amounts of gin. Throw in Nicholas Parsons, vomit, Peter Cook playing a vile murderer and you have one of the 1980s finest comedies. It was basically the Dangerous Brothers (his and Ade's Saturday Live duo) pissed up on booze being vile. Classic.

Around the same time, in the late 80s, Rik and Ade spoofed fame with the similarly grotesque *Filthy Rich and Catflap*, all about a deluded wannabe celeb, played by Rik, who can't seem to accept he has no talent. The coat draped over the shoulders, the crappy TV appearances, the shocking clothes and manner; Rik really knew the type of person he was spoofing for sure. It was hilarious, but the show has barely been repeated since and remains one of their lesser known works, despite a brilliant turn by Nigel Planer as his disgusting wheezing agent. But it wasn't all mad slapstick of course. Rik also dominated the world of satirical comedy with his perfect portrayal of slimy Tory MP Alan B'stard in the excellent *New Statesman*. Alan was a character Rik would return to time and again, seeing him as a perfect tool to vent out his political hang ups. Stage shows, TV specials... B'stard was just about due for a comeback. There is plenty of material in the current Conservative government to draw from, that's for sure. Rik was also unforgettable in his *Blackadder* cameos as *Flasheart*, a ladies man with a penchant for headbutting.

An overlooked series Rik did in the early 90s was *Rik Mayall Presents*, a set of brilliant hour long specials



that showcased his varied acting ability. The best for me was Mickey Love, in which he played a cheesy game show host who hid a darker inner self, which is eventually exposed at the shocking end of the episode. Rik proved he was a great straight actor on screen.

Of course, some of his most celebrated work was for children. The brilliant Grim Tales had Rik reciting Grimm stories with wild delight, and his legendary telling of George's Marvellous Medicine for the iconic Jackanory will go down in history as one of the best moments in kid's TV history. Similarly, Drop Dead Fred, although not strictly a kid's film, always seems to appeal to the next generation of youngsters that comes along. Mayall is brilliant as the imaginary friend who returns to Phoebe Cates' life when she is in need. It proved to be one of his most enduring roles.

For me, Rik Mayall will always be the sad creep Richie in Bottom; a camp, aggressive, violent virgin living with Eddie Hitler in a hideous flat in Hammersmith. The show ran for three series and had a massive audience throughout the early to mid 90s. The live shows will go down in legend as some of the best comedy extravaganzas of all time, and even when the cock ups were planned they were still hilarious. Rik was on overload during these shows and the very sight of him put people in stitches.

After his horrific quad bike crash though, TV and film slowed down for him and became less notable, although he did do some great work. Guest House Paradiso, the post accident Bottom movie, is utterly hilarious. His autobiography, Bigger Than Hitler Better Than Christ, is one of the funniest books I have ever read (and I still dip into it quite often, even more so this week).

In 2010 I got to work with him on the audiobook Cutey and the Sofaguard, around the time he got into voice acting again. He even recorded a stirring world cup anthem, and also appeared in another couple of Comic Strip films and a Jonathon Creek special. The man still had a hell of a lot of talent in him and his brief cameos in Greg Davies' Man Down proved he could still dominate whatever he was in; no matter how little he was in it.

Because Rik didn't appear on chat shows, panel game shows, or shove his face on to reality TV, people had, I believe, wondered what the hell had happened to him, unaware that he continued to work, sometimes in brilliant circumstances. News of his death on the 9th of June reminded people how great he was, and the tragedy spread fast, with tributes, articles and pieces spewing out (ooer) all over the internet. His wife Barbra had found him after lunch time dead, and as I write this, the cause is still unknown.

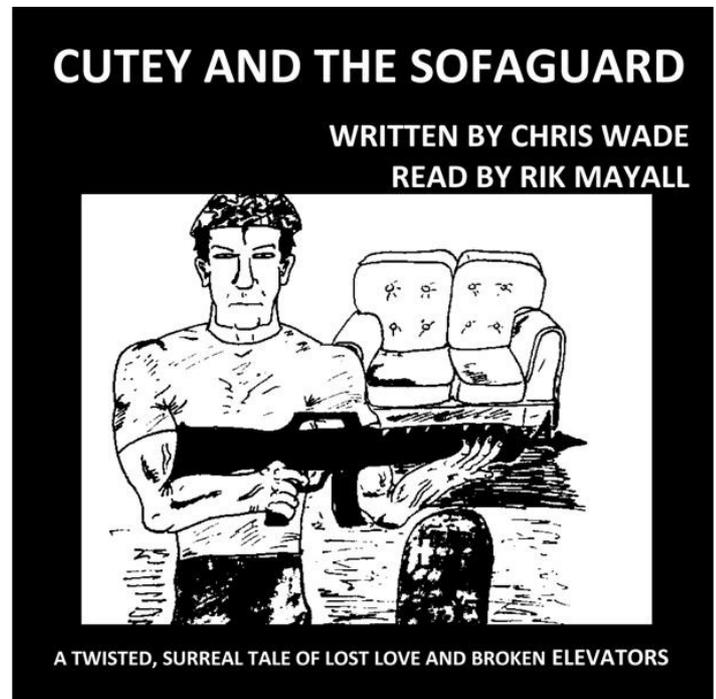
British comedy has lost one of its greats in my opinion. Rik Mayall is up there with Morecambe and Wise, Two Ronnies, Steptoe and Son, Monty Python.... He is one of the class acts, one of the best we've ever had and looking back on his varied and wonderful body of work only highlights this fact. I feel for his family.

RIP Rik Mayall. 1958 - 2014

RECORDING CUTEY AND THE SOFAGUARD WITH RIK MAYALL A DIARY...

In 2009 I started my first proper full fiction book, *Cutey and the Sofaguard*. It was a weird story that I constructed around some of the odd ideas I had come up with while working at a stationery shop, but it developed into a slightly creepy stalker sort of tale. It starts with a nameless man stuck in a lift on the way to see who we presume is his true love in hospital and it kind of gets weirder and weirder after that. Some of the characters include Kevin the Sniffer, Uncle Archie, Rico Romano “the spick who loves sex” and Mr Warmy. It started as a laugh and started to get deeper, although it is still a ridiculous story. I felt like I had something though, something unique with its own language and outlook. I still don’t think I could write a fiction book that was any good after that one. It had more feeling to it, a bit more depth and anything I did after fiction-wise was trying to live up to it. The others sounded forced in comparison. But *Cutey and the Sofaguard* seems to have become my one semi-cultish piece of fiction. When I released it as a paperback in 2009, it unexpectedly did okay, despite no press or promotion whatsoever. I remember being amazed that I sold a few copies in America on Amazon. I didn’t think much else of it though after that.

One afternoon in December of 2009 however, I decided to see who looked after Rik Mayall’s business affairs. I hadn’t thought of doing this previously at all,



but that day it just popped into my mind somewhat out of the blue. God knows why, maybe I had watched *Bottom* or *Comic Strip* that day. But when I wrote *Cutey and the Sofaguard* in 2008, I had just been re-reading Rik’s hilarious spoof biography *Bigger Than Hitler Better Than Christ*, and all through the writing process, which had took place in the back garden of my pokey flat during the summer, I couldn’t get Rik’s voice out of my head. Weirdly, I used his voice and delivery style as a guide for the nameless hero of *Cutey*. Obviously I never imagined I could ever get Rik Mayall to work with me, but it helped get me into the head of the shocking but likeable character. I do know that I loved writing *Cutey and the Sofaguard*. It was kind of addictive, sitting out there with cups of tea and a thick notebook, jotting down the mad ideas I had accumulated since my days at the stationery shop. All those weird scenarios I had dreamt up and all the odd characters that had come in every day had paid off and formed into the basis of a story and a writing style that was kind of its own, if technically flawed.

A quick Google search led me to the information I needed and an email was soon sent to Mayall’s agent saying I would love for Rik to take a look at my book, which I had spent weeks typing up from the note pad (a

spine bending month that resulted in some pretty bad posture for some time). The sudden plan was to have him narrate an audiobook version of the story, but no thought had gone into the budget, how I would pay the man or anything seemingly so trivial. I was always a huge fan of Rik Mayall, ever since I was a small child. My favourite thing he had done was the third Bottom live show, Hooligan's island.

If I am honest I really didn't expect a reply. But his agent emailed me back the same day saying he would read it and they might be in contact within the next couple of months to see what he thought. I expected nothing else of it. About a week later though, his agent called me saying that Rik loved it and HAD to do it. He was incredibly taken by the material. The joy I felt cannot be described. It was such an odd feeling that I was going to be doing this project that I had dreamt up as a kind of fantasy. Arrangements were soon made for three recording days to be set aside in Rik and my own schedules (as if I even had a bloody schedule) and we also planned a meeting at Rik's agency's office in London to go over the script and characters etc.

It was a Tuesday I believe, when I got on the coach at Leeds station at around 6 in the morning, to head down to London. It was a 5 hour journey and I was alone, but god was I excited. In my bag I distinctly remember having a box of muesli bars to keep me going and some back issues of Q magazine from the late 80s (always up to date you understand) to read, with Chrissie Hynde and Lou Reed interviews in them. I also took some notes as well on the long trip down; what I wrote I am not entirely sure. As I entered London, and the city's heavy traffic jams, I began to feel even more excited, texting my dad on the coach to tell him I was nearly there. Off the coach, I roamed the streets around Victoria Coach Station and attempted to hail a taxi down. In Leeds we just have taxi ranks and if you desire a car you just go queue up or get into whichever taxi is

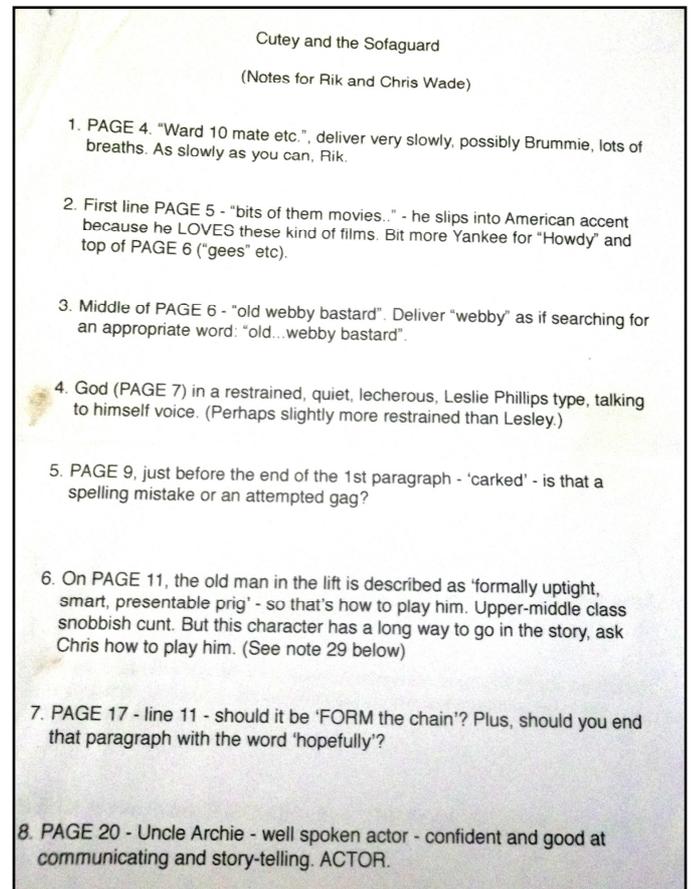
parked there waiting for you. In London of course you must aggressively hail one down. This was all a bit tricky for me, but in the end a kind cockney taxi driver pulled over to take me there. I arrived at the large imposing building and asked the chap on the door which floor I needed to be on. Advising me to take the lift I somehow got confused, came out of the lift, went down some stairs and ended up back in front of the doorman, who I asked for instructions yet again. He must have thought I was a right northern plonker. In the end I did get to the right door and a kind man ushered me down an immaculate corridor, adorned with posters of Bottom live shows and classic Rik Mayall TV landmarks. I took a seat in a large room with client's photos scattered around and Young Ones script books on the shelves and waited for him to arrive. Finally he did so and I heard his familiar tones engaging with the man who had showed me in.

"There's this guy called Chris Wade. He's sent me a great book," I heard him say. Then he came in to the room. "You're fucking early!" he joked, shaking my hand.

"I'm always early," I replied as he took a seat beside me. Rik ordered us two cups of tea and he took out the script, which he had printed off seeing as I had emailed it to his agent. I remember his face being big and close up to mine, alarmingly so in fact, considering this was Rik Mayall's face. He told me how much he loved it, explained what he liked and began to go through his notes, gliding through the script, his various brilliant ideas and the characterisations he had in mind. He was in fact running it by me to make sure I approved of his take on the script and I have to say there wasn't one thing I thought was ill fitting. In fact it was all in the way I had first imagined his voice to sound, right back when I was writing it. This really was a surreal experience. Just goes to show it's always worth it just to ask.

Rik was great that day. We laughed and joked. I remember one moment when I spotted the photo of Rik on the window sill. It was a very professional posey sort of picture, a bit more serious than the Rik we're used to. "I was taking the piss," he laughed, turning the photo away. I offered him a muesli bar. "Wow!" he said. "You live life on the edge don't you?" I remember he accepted a bar and put the wrapper inside a very expensive looking vase on the table in front of us, insisting I do the same when mine was finished too.

Rik went through all his ideas and I loved them all. At one point he gave me some options for how I might like him to portray Alonut Missing, the archaeologist who pops up about half way through the story. He went into a great Lord Flashheart type routine, booming his voice out and going through the dialogue. It was great and I picked it as a definite. At one point he embodied the Sofaguard and did a few versions of himself, moving around the room flamboyantly and trying out different ideas. "It would make a great play," he said, his eyes sort of drifting past me. Then he snapped himself back into the room. "But let's concentrate on this now." It's got to be said that I did start Cutey as a mad comedy with little depth, but as it went along the story gained a bit of power. But I never imagined someone could look so into it and pull out such detail and strength as Rik did. He loved the story, he was genuinely taken by it and actually moved by the main character and his relationship with the Sofaguard. See, the Sofaguard was kind of like an imaginary friend, a figure of comfort for our nameless hero and it is pretty clear by the end of the book that he isn't really there. It was amazing to see how much thought he had put into this and he had even printed off his notes twice, one copy for me and one for him, which I thought was lovely. One note still makes me laugh. It's Rik pondering how he might play the old man who the hero gets trapped in the lift with: "Upper-middle class snobbish cunt. Ask Chris how to play



him!" He also notes that all the "shouty" bits should be recorded on the last day. Looking at these notes today really does remind me how much work and effort he put into this project. It really did impress me at the time. A well known comedian like himself was doing this odd little audiobook for nothing up front, and didn't even seem bothered what he might be getting at all.

Before leaving I asked Rik where the toilet was and he directed me towards it, following me in and doing the classic pervy Rik Mayall nostril face, suggesting I bring my pillow with me to the recording sessions because we were both a pair of pillow biters, which we both agreed was true. We went downstairs and Rik lit a fag. He offered me one but I told him I didn't smoke. "Why, are you a queer?" he joked, before telling me of his schooldays when smoking was the cool thing to do. At the end of our meeting he hailed me a taxi and said he'd see me in 2 weeks. I shook his hand but he ignored this and hugged me instead, saying he couldn't wait to get going on the project. As I left in the taxi, Rik gave me a

wave and a smile, but I thought it only right to imitate his classic V sign and I flipped him as I left for the coach station, which made him smile. I couldn't wait to get back down there to start work on Cutey and the Sofaguard.

In no time at all, although it felt like much longer to me, I was on my way down to London again to record the audiobook. I had no idea, nor did I much care, how many people might want to hear this, or how much money it might make, but I knew that it was going to be great fun. Taking along a bag with me, I made sure I had all my essentials; money, script (which my dad had kindly printed off for me on his PC. Good job, as printing a script off for myself had completely slipped my mind). Then there was the nightmarish journey to find the studio. In the end it was discovered down an alleyway opposite Shepherd's Bush market. I waited outside and eventually the owner of the studio, Lloyd, appeared, looking very shy and nervous. I remember his hand shaking as he unlocked the door.

"What time is Rik coming?" he asked, as if we were both war criminals waiting for our executioner to turn up.

"About now," I replied, sitting in the waiting room, admiring all the signed memorabilia left by the bands that had rehearsed or recorded there, including Gong and The Specials.

"Do you want a cup of tea?"

"Oh yeah please," I said, licking my lips at the thought of it. Lloyd scrambled around behind the counter, looking puzzled.

"We don't have any. I'm going to have to go to the shop to get some."

There goes that idea then.

Ten minutes later he is back, informing me that Rik is outside having a fag. I went straight out there like an excited kid, greeted Rik and had a quick chat. He seemed genuinely excited to be here and to be working on such "a great project." He also liked the fact it was just me and him, and there was no "suit" involved. It was total freedom. "We are not definers," he later said to me. "We are chaos advisers." I know what he meant... kind of.

The first day of recording was, to be perfectly honest, very hard work and a bit of a slog. It was also nerve racking. When Rik arrived in the voice studio up the little stair case, he was slightly perplexed. Firstly, the voice booth was little more than a cupboard. "It's a bit shit," he said, before apologising to Lloyd quickly in case his harshness had caused offence. He laughed and said how there is usually a large room, a glass panel to the mixing desk and a green light to tell him when he is being recorded. There was none of that here. Bollocks to all that, I'd already spent all my money! Then there was the task of getting him in the booth itself. Firstly he went and stood inside it, then Lloyd and I shoved a great big chair in after him. The booth was so narrow that the chair arms touched both sides of the wall and he was totally jammed in. A little sentence raced around my mind repeatedly; "I am shoving Rik Mayall into a cupboard!" It was, it has to be said, a surreal experience. As we started on the script, it was great to hear Rik's voice reading my mad material, but there was something bothering me. Rik didn't seem very well to me and struggled with the first few pages. After dinner time (with Rik buying sandwiches and bananas, a generous thing to do seeing as he hadn't even been paid) he seemed refuelled and was back in the booth, tearing into the work. It sounded great. But after the first day at 3 o'clock, I felt as if the flu was coming on over me like a shitty blanket of muffled unpleasantness. Rik also looked very ill, and I thought he might faint

any time soon. After the session we went and sat in the café around the corner. We had a few teas and even some cake, but Rik looked knackered. He said if he felt the same the day after he would have to cancel and record the rest of it when he was better. This worried me somewhat. I had enough money to record over the three days and that was it, no other money at all in fact. This was all I had.

That night I was ill too, quivering and shivering all through the night like a climaxing hound. I was dehydrated and kept glugging desperately from a bottle of cola. Weirdly, in my tired, fucked up, delirious state, the cola was “a baddy.” That is the only way I can explain it. I knew I should have got to the sink and got a water, but cola was tricking me into having its sweet delights instead. I was waking up every three minutes and every time I did so, was convinced I had slept through the whole three days and had missed the recording sessions completely. I also had the jappy crappies very severely. It could have been the prawn sandwich I suppose, but whatever caused all this, it was a hellish night. That sounds like an exaggeration but it definitely isn't! It was horrendous. The longest and bleakest night of my life. Of course, I sound really dramatic, but I do so hate being ill.

The rest of the recording was great though. Rik would send someone out to buy bananas for everyone and it was a laugh even though I felt so ill. He even bought me a Lemsip, my first ever Lemsip in fact (now there's an amazing factoid for you). He tore through the script, adding naughty words, being exuberant and giving me take after take to make sure I was happy. Brilliant.

On the last day I remember us sitting in a café and it was very windy, and I mean VERY windy. Blow your wig off kind of windy. The glass beside us was bending in the wind and Rik joked that if the glass broke and killed him, I would make a fortune off it because it

would be the final thing he ever did. This seems sad in retrospect, but the memory of all this is so warm and very vivid. I'll never forget any of it.

It wasn't until September of that year that the audiobook came out. Rik's people kept on making me do revisions of the bloody contract because I hadn't a clue what I was doing, let's be honest and they were putting it off until he had released his world cup song. Not a bad track that.

At the start of September I went down to interview him for Hound Dawg and we did a great interview, and we certainly had a laugh. I also took my fiancée Linzi and sister Amy down too, and they went off to browse the market stalls while I did the interview with Rik. I have some of the audio recording of that day and I was listening to it today. There's some lovely parts to it and a real warmth there, out grossing each other (he definitely won!) and talking about Dr Feelgood, Dali and the Cutey audiobook.

When I listen back to Cutey and the Sofaguard I have a big smile on my face. It was an amazing experience to have and an amazing memory in all. Rik encouraged me to keep writing. “Keep it wild Chris!” he would text to me. He would ring me as well and we'd chat about all sorts. One thing he once spoke of was how he was thinking of death more and more and how the sofaguard reminded him of the Reaper. He also told me he had a dream where Death came to him, but he had Rik Mayall's face.

I remember watching him all through my childhood, thinking he was the funniest man on the planet, which he probably was. I am honoured to have known him for that short time and worked so closely with him on such a riveting, wild and exciting project.

Aww, what a shame the man is gone.

THE RIK MAYALL INTERVIEW SHEPHERD'S BUSH STUDIOS

SEPTEMBER 2010

*The filthy interview reprinted from Hound
Dawg issue 10...*

CHRIS: I think we should start.

RIK: I think we should say let's squirt the mother.

CHRIS: Squirt the mother?

RIK: Yeah. We funky men, like me, who are totally cool and obviously have large penises, when you're shooting a film or shooting a child in the back garden, always say "Shoot the motherfucker" and as this is an audio recorded interview I am saying "Squirt the mother." Or perhaps it should be "touch up the mother?" Wait, this interview is going to be in print isn't it?

CHRIS: A huh.

RIK: Fist the mother!

CHRIS: How does it feel to be back where it all began Rik, in the room we recorded Cutey?

RIK: Well, it's always difficult to... oh fucking hell that's a shit question, why don't you go eat your own dung you cunt hole? You're about as good a journo as Adolf. Mind you, he was a good journo. I just wanna put down in print that I think Chris Wade is one of the greatest writers there is. Oh wait, that's you isn't it?

CHRIS: Yes that's me.

RIK: I think you're one of the great writers of all time. So why haven't I been fucking paid? Come on, where's my fucking money? Cough up!

CHRIS: I thought you wanted me to swallow.



RIK: No, where's my money?

CHRIS: Didn't you read the small print in the contract? There is no money.

RIK: (Laughs) I was going to say something else then.

CHRIS: About coughing up?

RIK: Oh no it was something much worse. I won't even give you a hint. Anyway, I got sent this book. Now listen reader, the important thing here is that I am being interviewed by Chris Wade who is the man who wrote *Cutey* and the *Sofaguard*, It just came out of the blue, this book, which really suits my style. I took it for three reasons. One, for the cash. Oh no, that's the third reason. Reason two, for the cash. No I didn't do this for money. I did this for my public. I love my public all over the place; in toilets, in alleys, I love my public in group sessions. No, seriously, I just read the book and I thought it was just magnificent. It's very funny yes but it's also very weird. There's an area touched here, that is an area in great comedy, which is that moment, that spilt second of silence before the punch line comes, where you set up a joke like "What's the great thing about twenty eight year olds? There's twenty of them!" It might not be that joke that was just the first thing that came into my mouth. What I mean is there's a beautiful moment of silence and slight fear. I hate to repeat myself in interviews, but as I once said, a laugh is a civilized snarl, like when an animal snarls to get rid of something near him that's a threat, whether it is a disease or a member of another herd. That's what this is. Because we're humans and we're civilized, rather than going GRRR, we bear our teeth and laugh. So there is an element of fear and confusion, also fascination, but when you come to the realisation that it's a joke, that's when you bare your teeth and you laugh at it. That area, between the feed line and the realisation is where Chris Wade – I am being interviewed by Chris Wade but I'm gonna talk about him as a writer now. I don't know where he got his imagination from. It's very awkward talking about Chris to Chris but he has a fantastic imagination. It suits my style perfectly so that it's not all HA HA funny. Some of it is weird and quite often it's funny. But it's that strange weirdness that I love and

it's so unlike anything else. The fascination of the moment. Chris offers me so much, well you do Chris I should say. I'm not here to suck Chris's cock; that's why I can speak clearly. But the fact of the matter is, it's just a beautiful piece of writing that fascinated me and made me laugh.



CHRIS: So it's the difference of the book that attracted you?

RIK: Yes. I mean, I was looking back... When Tony Blair tried to assassinate me and failed so badly, and tried to destroy my career. The labour party, I mean the Nazi party, not the full on SS which is the Conservative party and the Gestapo which is the Liberal party.

CHRIS: You mean the plain, regular Nazis don't you? Not the far fetched ones.

RIK: Yeah the Labour party. At the end of the last century and when I was in my prime,

when he tried to assassinate me, Blair had a big party and he didn't invite me and Ade. All the other cool people, the utterly great people like Harry Enfield were invited, but not me. And then he tried to assassinate me. I met God, as everyone knows.

CHRIS: Didn't he ask for your autograph?

RIK: No that was Jesus.

CHRIS: Are you sure Jesus wasn't just asking for his dad, like God was a bit too shy to ask?

RIK: Well as far as I know, it was Jesus that wanted it, but he got God to ask for it... I think so anyway. But the point is God sent me back down because I hadn't finished my work. As you know I am the fifth coming. I can heal all sorts of wounds, especially female genital wounds. It's not so much healing as preventing, so I don't want any one coming to me with genital warts.



CHRIS: Oh god no. You just want to make sure they don't get poorly?

RIK: Oh yes. I want them to know this.

CHRIS: So your knob is like a vaccination?

RIK: Very much so, yes. I think I might call you Saint Chris.

CHRIS: Well thanks.

RIK: But this was just a past time until you had finished writing your book.

CHRIS: Yeah. As long as I know this.

RIK: Yeah, I have achieved my destiny now. Does that sort out the first question?

CHRIS: Definitely. So it isn't just the humour, it's the weirdness too? Is that what might attract you to a script like Cutey and the Sofaguard?

RIK: Well I had never seen a script like Cutey and the Sofaguard before. I was fascinated with the story. But I think it's because you were attracted to my skills, and what you said about wanting someone to manifest these characters. I think there are 24 characters. There are so many. For example viewers – I do like that, for example viewers- we can have a poll in the magazine. People could e mail you Chris with their favourite character and you could put up your most voted for character. I can sit here with my hand on my knob, with my heart on my knob; I mean my hand on my heart... No what's the point in that? Of course I'm telling the truth. The Wisdom Twins, within Cutey and the Sofaguard are my absolute favourite characters. They play so well. I tell you what is really interesting. I was listening to the tapes the other day and I was thinking 'Is this a development?' Writing for me has been pretty quiet lately. But you are always searching as a comedian- no don't call me a comedian, call me a comedy actor. A pan global phenomenon. You finish a decade and then you ridicule that decade, as in I finished my teens and ridiculed them in The Young Ones. I ridiculed my twenties in Bottom, well a kind of a grey area. In my late thirties I did the Statesman. But when suddenly the BBC- this is the point I want to get to. Ade and I got to write a new television idea that we wanted to go forward with. But TV had changed and they wouldn't allow me and Ade on it again. I thought 'that's fucking weird'. I mean for 20 years we'd been rocking along and having a good time but telly suddenly says 'you're too violent. You're too rude.' *(Rik and I suddenly adopt cool American accents)* WHAT THE FUCK?

CHRIS: AINT THAT A BITCH?

RIK: YOU GOT SOMETHING DRIBBLING OUT OF YOUR PUSSY? Anyway, so me and Ade were banned from the telly so we went back on the road for a couple of years. So we thought, come one, we'd done Richie and Eddie. As in The Young Ones, you got to stop at the right time.

CHRIS: It did stop at the right point I think.

RIK: Yeah. So I took the Statesman on the road and that ended Tony Blair's career. I am very proud of being responsible for the demise of two of the biggest fascists of the 20th century. I am very proud of that.

CHRIS: Thatcher too, right?

RIK: Yep. Destroying the career of Thatcher and the career of Blair.

CHRIS: Do you put that on your CV?

RIK: Of course. But the point I am coming to is television is a dying format. People come to me and say 'You're not on telly much these days.' A woman the other day said 'Rik, you're not on telly much these days.' So I said 'Well that's because they don't like to make the stuff that Ade and I do anymore.' This woman says 'Well yeah, everything on telly now is such shit.' This is coming from an old lady, a perfectly nice member of the public. I mean television used to be the theatre of dreams. Now it's....

CHRIS: Talent shows and people putting other people down.

RIK: Yeah. And it's a combination of a disused bus stop and the police state. So that's another wonderful thing about Cutey and the Sofaguard being released on the internet. So there is no censorship at all. I have this opportunity to open up completely. Chris Wade wrote me, I can't keep the count, 24 or 25 characters. On to the main character. He doesn't really have a name you hero does he, why is that?

CHRIS: I don't think a name is important. He's a kind of no name that sinks into this surreal world. I don't think he needs a name, because his individuality is not that important in the scheme of things. He is kind of like the every man.

RIK: Yes, don't take this the wrong way readers but there is a vague Clint in High Plains Drifter feel to it. Although our hero talks a lot, there is that element, the stranger, or the every man as you said. In some respects. That's what is so encouraging about the end. I am not gonna give any clues away viewer, but there is something about the end that leans towards a next book. There could be ten books in this whole series.

CHRIS: In this world, this surreal landscape, endings don't have to be endings at all. That's the way I see it. It can end in a way, but that's not necessarily the way it really ended. There is a level of fantasy in it for sure.

RIK: Yeah, but it depends what level of fantasy you mean. I believe that everything that happened in the book really happened.

CHRIS: Well I like you thinking that. I am open to people's interpretations. I would like some people to think it all happened and others to be confused. It depends on your mind.

RIK: Well yeah, that attracts me. Something someone said about Bottom was that the reason it lasts is because it is very timeless.

CHRIS: There's no outside world for the most part is there? It's mostly in the flat.

RIK: Yes. Also because they both lead such shitty lives their clothes aren't necessarily....

CHRIS: There is no fashion.

RIK: Quite. There's nothing of the time in it.

CHRIS: Which is why it can never date.

RIK: Yeah which is the problem Alan B'stard had, when it was such a specific assault on Thatcher.



CHRIS: But Alan can move on cant he?

RIK: Alan can, yes. But then again, when you repeat the programmes they're specifically about Geoffrey Howe's decisions in 1989....

CHRIS: So younger generations might not understand that.

RIK: Quite, quite. And dads my age will have forgotten what exactly Geoffrey Howe was doing twenty years ago. There was a point I was getting to earlier. When you are in your fifties, you look back at your forties, what do you ridicule? It was such a confused period of my life, what with accidents and being actually clinically dead for five days. So how do you really explore that? I don't care about sounding pretentious here; we've both grown up in a rock n' roll culture, both yours and mine generation Chris. I wondered if, for I am not Mozart I am James Brown, in as much as James' performance comes from his soul, from inside. So I think I am a soul performer, which does sound pretentious. But lord knows, a pan global phenomenon like me, has no ego. It's too big to carry; I leave various egos around the place. Anyway so that is another facet that attracted me to the Wisdom Twins particularly. I mean there was a million other reasons I did it, but there is something that just automatically comes out with the Wisdom Twins. You got Rik, you got Richie and elements of Alan in the over

privilege, whereas Rik from Young Ones was slightly over privileged because he came from a middle class back ground. Richie was over privileged in as much as he had a greater intelligence than Eddie. But of course, Eddie's low intelligence, bulldog, bulldozer approach through any problems was very much as equal as Richie's approach. So they are all facets of the inner soul. You see, a soul comedian. I have always shied away from calling myself a comedian. You know, 1 2 3 here's a gag, 1 2 3 here's a gag! It's not exciting. I wanted an explosion of emotion. Very James Brown, very Little Richard, Very Lee Brilleaux.

CHRIS: I love Dr Feelgood!

RIK: Yeah, I love Wilko. When you read this Wilko, respect. Anyway. So when I hear my performance of the Wisdom Twins I think THERE HE IS, THAT'S WHO I WANT TO BE. And it's not merely a repeat of old Richie accents or Rik accents. They have facets of them yes, but it's very much like James Brown doing his third single, like Little Richard doing his forth single, it's like Lee Brilleaux doing She Does it Right! OK, I got it now, I think, YEAH NOW I GOT IT, THAT'S WHAT BEING IN YOUR FUCKING FIFTIES IS ALL ABOUT!

CHRIS: So you see this as a thematic continuation?



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NEWS



Mike bids farewell to school

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PROPERTY



What's on the market? Free guide inside

RIK ON RECORD TO SUPPORT A RISING WRITER

AN aspiring young writer has enlisted the help of comedy star Rik Mayall to boost sales of his latest book.

The former Young Ones and New Statesman star is the voice behind an audio version of *Cutey* and the *Sofaguard*, a novel written by Leeds-based Chris Wade.

The 25-year-old, who lives in Rodley, sent a copy of the book to the renowned stand-up comedian and actor and was thrilled when he agreed to front the audiobook.

Her said: "The title sounds a bit like a children's book but in fact it is a surreal comic novel which is a little bit anarchic and twisted."

"When I was writing it Rik Mayall's voice just kept coming into my head. So I sent it to his agent on the off chance and couldn't believe it when he rang back just a week later and said yes."

"We met up in London and recorded it in about 15 hours and Rik was awesome. Every now and then you

by Susan Press

could see that mad persona come through but when he was working he was really professional and just threw himself into it."

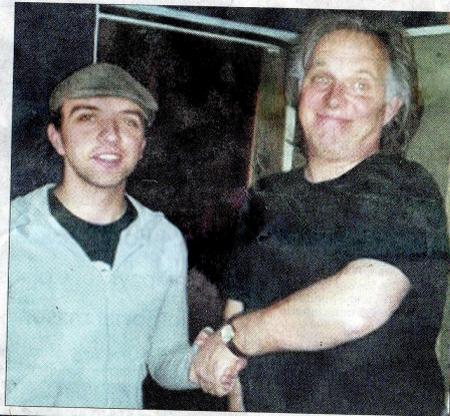
The audiobook will be on sale at the end of this month.

Chris, who set up his own publishing company Wisdom Twins Books a year ago, is also the author of a biography about Leeds-born actor Malcolm McDowell.

Other enterprises include a free monthly magazine called *Hound Dawg*, which he also wrote for and edited and *The Hoover Dam Companion*, an analysis of a recent album by former *Stranglers* frontman Hugh Cornwell.

Cutey and the *Sofaguard* marks Chris's first venture into the realms of the audio book and is available as a download from iTunes and Amazon MP3.

More information from www.wisdomtwinsbooks.weebly.com
wtt.news@yypn.co.uk



FUNNY MAN: Chris Wade, left, meets comedy star Rik Mayall at the recording.

RIK: I think so. It grabs your heart and it grabs your cock rather than it interests your intellect.

CHRIS: The aggression of the Wisdom Twins..

RIK: Yes, meaningless, utterly meaningless. Over privileged.

CHRIS: Filthy rich.

RIK: Yes, but perhaps that is a critique of my actual existence. I have had a very pleased life, a very privileged life. But it's the fact that you are being so nihilistic and so anarchic, that you have had a good time in life and you should share that goodness and say thank you, but no, YOU JUST WANT MORE! YOU JUST WANT MORE! (Laughs) You find the dark side and the bad side.

CHRIS: The Wisdom Twins are certainly the most RIK characters in the book, the most fitting to your career. I think anyway.

RIK: Yes the contemporary Rik, yes. But importantly it's not....

CHRIS: It is NOT a repeat.

RIK: Exactly. That's important. Never look back, keep rocking on. But interestingly I was very daunted by the Wisdom Twins. I thought 'hmm how am I gonna play this?'

CHRIS: Did you like them straight away?

RIK: I saw them as rather daunting. I think I was allowed to add one or two words to the script as well.

CHRIS: Yes a couple of C words. (Laughs) THIS IS MY CUNT BROTHER!

RIK: Yes! (Laughs a heck of a lot) Absolutely, unnecessarily horrid.

CHRIS: There was one line in there you liked a lot which was 'Hurry up you dog boy, where's my fucking food you tosser?'

RIK: Dog boy, you use that a lot. Where did you get that from?

CHRIS: Well I think it's the most degrading insult there is. Not only are you a dog you are a dog boy, you're a gimpy little nothing. It's such a put down.

RIK: Well, an important point you made earlier, it depends on the audience's own interpretation and imagination. So for me dog boy is unpleasant in a very different way. It's like you're the boy I keep in the back room and pull you out on all fours and fuck you when I feel like it, and I leave you in there.

CHRIS: Well apparently dog boy is related to a gimp in reality.

RIK: Yeah but gimps aren't much, they're just tied up, but dog boy is really fucking nasty.

CHRIS: On all fours.

RIK: Yeah and the age is a bit questionable as well. It is very nasty. But thank you for letting me use the C word. We come to the shock value, the power value. You can't swear on TV now, they bleep the word bloody. So that is a very fine point, that I have found something here. Now don't forget I found the original Rik with the audience. Richie I found with Ade, with Ben Elton for Richie in Filthy Rich and Catflap.

CHRIS: One of my faves.

RIK: Alan I found with other writers as well. So you agonise on your own, so I think I have always been a co writer rather than a writer. So those guys are just delicious, the Wisdom Twins. But putting them at my number one favourite is like setting fire to a box of fire works because they'd both be arguing about



who was actually number one. So that's causing trouble.

CHRIS: So they're the guys that really...

RIK: They do it for me, crucially. Number two is very difficult. I love the hero's father. There are two things we could ask of the viewers. 1, what do YOU think is the hero's name? I think that might be interesting because I have my own little ideas about that. And another one, here is a quest for the listener – find out who the hero of the books' grandfather is. Of course it is findable, but it's fascinating when you do find out who he was. I won't give you any clues at all. But (laughter) Kevin the Sniffer, another character is involved but he is not the grandfather. But he is involved. We talk about favourites, certainly the hero's father. I love Nippy Want and I like Uncle Archie the Storyteller who is gorgeous. The posh old bloke in the lift; that's funny but it's a representation of humanity that hasn't surrendered. He has been fucked on all his life and he's an old soldier and a

representative of the MALE community. No surrender. He still has his libido.



boyfriend in the book. I love Alonut Missing, the archaeologist. I love Ruddy Mac the headmaster. The Sofaguard is fabulous. Of course he's fabulous, he's the fucking Sofaguard. That's without question. Davey, now there's a guy called Davey, go find him viewer. Davey has two very amusing assistants, who don't speak much, not nearly enough for me, but I would love to find out more about them. I wouldn't even suggest they were very horny women. But Davey is fantastic. Americans will like Davey; well they'll like them all. But also, I do sometimes wonder if Chris Wade isn't rather like Davey somewhere inside him. He loves gathering interesting people.

CHRIS: Hmm. That's interesting. You mean because when he hires people for the restaurant he never interviews them does he? He is attracted to their unusualness. The Irish cleaner for example.

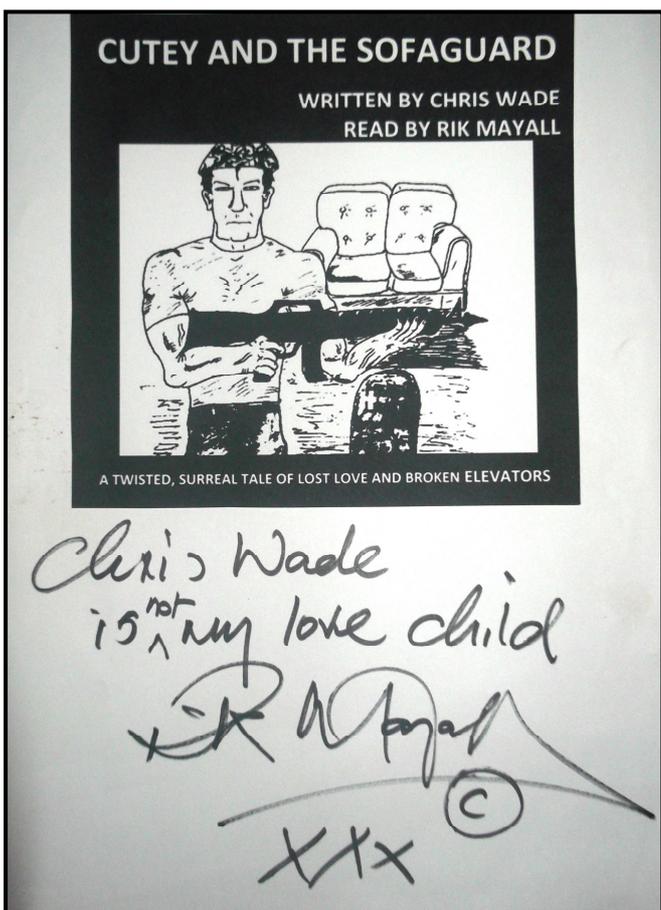
RIK: I love the cleaner. *(Puts on scouse accent)* And Starry Knight, the scouse bar man at Davey's. I like him; he's a bit like John Lennon. But he's great, a great gossip as well. I like the loud teacher Mister Henrietta. He's great. All the school mates and the bullies too.

CHRIS: Well there's so much in it isn't there?

RIK: it's massively rich. It's almost like two novels! When it comes to an end, and when he starts again with his new life. I'd say it was a story of love and growing up which is very puny.

CHRIS: But it is about coming of age. When people ask me what it's about I say it's about growing up, love, fantasy....

RIK: Well it is hard for us to define. You and I are not definers. You and I are the opposite of definition. Chaos, chaos advisers.



CHRIS: Well it isn't there at the beginning but it comes out.

RIK: Yes, but I don't wanna give too much away to the viewers. There are other fantastic characters. I also love Jerry, Philippa's

CHRIS: Anarchic?

RIK: Oh yeah. I would say..... Well, anarchy is life with no law. Nihilism is where you're actively against any particular law. Anarcho surrealism is much more interesting.

CHRIS: I have been calling it anarcho surrealism. You must have mentioned that phrase to me.

RIK: Well you must love Dali.

CHRIS: Oh yeah I do.

RIK: Me too. Dali's not very dissimilar to you, you know. It's extremely broad canvas with an extraordinary imagination. This is art! I have been yearning for an outlet for my work. The last decade, has been what I call the live decade; a few plays, two live shows with Ade and two Statesman tours. TV is over, but never look back and keep moving on. The beauty of this is that sound has never been explored properly for your generation. When you're young it's music, but this is very interesting. But anyway, the BBC did let me on with Rik Mayall's Bedside Tales. I have always wanted to be a story teller! Funnily enough one of the characters I love in Cutey and the Sofaguard is Uncle Archie the Storyteller, but not just Archie, the main character as well who is so loose and fluid. When I use the character's accent that I am talking about, and let it bleed into the prose. I don't care if this makes me sound pretentious, but I use my voice as a musical instrument. I have always wanted to sing. I've never been able to sing, so you ridicule what is pissing you off so I have always done bad singing. Ridicule what pisses you off. ATTACK THE ENEMY! But yeah, I was pleased with Bedside Tales because they let me put bits in alongside John Nicholson's main framework.

CHRIS: Like the story Bangkok Café?

RIK: Yeah, that was one of mine. I put in some very acidic stuff.

CHRIS: Well that was Dali-esque.

RIK: I'm glad you think that. Making pictures with words. One thing I love about it is it engages the audience. There's a sexy one with a girl guiding him through passages in a jungle.

CHRIS: The Mountain Girl!

RIK: Yes, well said. Quite sexy that one. So it's not 1 2 3 laugh, 1 2 3 laugh! This is the area I was talking about, in between the feed line and the punch line. I liked the idea of being alone with a person in a room. I'm sitting next to a very special friend, on the sofa with the curtains closed. That's how I saw Bedside Tales.

CHRIS: Pull the radio closer...

RIK: Yes, so here we have with your work, it can be listened to in a car, on the tube, on the bus, on your E pads or your G spots or whatever. Also, you listen to one chapter and there's the excitement of hearing the next one. But then again each chapter stands independently too, almost as independently as episodes of Bottom would. Usually your chapters are listenable to on their own. I love his mum too; she's so tight and middle class. It's always been a pleasure to play tight middle class women. I don't know why and I don't question why! But the important point is, here is an area where I can be liberated. There is no censorship.

END

HOUND DAWG MAGAZINE

