

Interview with R and K

Recorded 17 Oct 2021 and 31 Oct 2021

Recorded across 2 parts, due to an Error on Raminder's part.

Section 1: Biographical details

R: So you wanted your name withheld?

K: Yes.

R: Which is fine. I've designated you as "K" because you knit.

So I'd like to know a bit about why that is?

K: Well, primarily, it's because we have a family business and I wouldn't like to think that anything could affect that. My surname is quite unusual, and you'd be able to work out the family business from that and I really wouldn't want to do anything to its detriment-because we need it! So that's part of it. I guess the driving reason behind it is fear, isn't it?

R: Well, if you've got something to lose, you've got something to lose.

K: Exactly. So yes, fundamentally, it's fear. That's it really. Okay (laughs).

R: OK then. So who are you in your own words?

K: I'm 50 and I've got two children who are 17 and 22, so my main job for the last 20 odd years has been bringing them up. I am involved with the family business, bit of accounts, bit of marketing; a general involvement with it, and I'd say that that's me in a nutshell. Is there anything else that you want me to elaborate on?

R: Yeah, you mentioned that you kind of...last time we spoke, you'd kind of "gone under the radar." So could you tell me more about being "under the radar?"

K: For the majority of my life I have endeavoured to stay "under the radar." I don't mean [that] I'm doing anything nefarious or anything illegal, but I do tend to avoid authority if I

can. I describe myself as a bit of an outlier, I guess. So, on the surface, it may appear that I'm part of society, when really, I just dip in as and when I have to. I like to keep my head down and go about my own business. I'm very much "you do you and I'll do me."

R: So then, what typifies you as an outlier, let's say?

K: Socially, I've never bought into the "ooh let's go down the pub, let's go to clubs, go out," and have a big social life or be the life and soul of the party. It's always been an effort, I limit how much social interaction I have, I find it quite draining.

If I'm with the right people, it can be quite uplifting, although, even then, I will have to come away for some quiet time to recover from it. As I've gotten older, I've become more adept at recognising the situations and knowing the kind of group setups that will drain me, and therefore I avoid them.

So...particularly when it comes to medical stuff, I would say I'm an outlier. Although I'm not staunchly anti-anything medical, I had both of my kids at home, and it never occurred to me that it was something strange to do. Even twenty years ago, I guess it was considered strange by other people.

R: OK.

K: I know that friends and family thought that I was a little bit "hippie" for doing it, whereas that's not something I'd ever think of myself as being. For me it was, "well, why would I? [hospital birth], I'd like to be at home." So I've never really conformed. I may appear that I do, because I look like I'm going along with it, but I'll only do as much as I actually have to, to keep myself from standing out for the wrong reasons, I guess.

R: Okay. well, I guess we know the answer to this question, but are you more comfortable in groups, or on your own?

K: On my own. I like being in groups, sometimes. I'm not a complete, antisocial type, but perfectly happy in my own company. Perfectly happy to entertain myself using books and the internet. Sitting and thinking is enough...I think that I once heard it described as having a rich "inner life." And I would say that that probably sums it up quite well.

R: OK. And so not being invited to a party and being socially excluded in some capacity would not bother you?

K: No, it would be a relief. Without a doubt. If I hear rumour of a party or pub night, my initial instinct is, "Oh, no, what can I say to get out of that?"

R: Just say no.

K: Yes, but you have to say "no" in careful ways sometimes because it depends upon the group you're saying "no" to.

R: Hmm. I think we'll agree to disagree there.

K: Well, for example, if you are working with people, and you work with them day in, day out, and they're having social events, I believe that there are some that you have to grit your teeth and go to, so I pick and choose them. But generally, I will say "no," and not go.

[R asks about how the events of the past months have affected interactions with her family.]

K: It could have been horrendous if my close family all disagreed on it, but it's been an experience which has brought us closer together and given rise to conversations that have, I suppose, been quite enriching, as we've discussed how we feel about things. I don't have a large family that I'm in touch with anyway. My parents live close by, they're in their eighties. Slightly dysfunctional, to put it politely, introverted themselves, a bit odd, but that's fine. They're far more traditional in terms of "if the government says get a vaccination," well, you go and get the vaccination.

Although, my dad has a healthy scepticism towards authority, when it comes to things like that, he will pretty much toe the line. So, in terms of talking about things that are happening, and the government, no problems at all discussing that; and I tend to not go there regarding the vaccination side of things as we have differing opinions.

My dad asked me "are you going to?" [Me] "No" and then it's been left at that.

We continued to see each other over lockdown, it's not been a problem in that respect. The other member of the family is my sister, slightly younger than me, she's far more, I suppose "woke" for want of a better expression, and she's said "oh, well, people are dying," and how terrible it all is and is much more of a rule follower than myself or my parents, and there has been a little bit of friction. But it's been at a minimum, because I don't challenge it, as I don't see the point. So yes, it could have been a huge issue, but I chose not to make it so, and therefore it isn't.

R: I mean, that's, that's fair enough. You know, I've come across people who don't bring up subjects past a certain point, because they don't see the utility in trying to change people's minds. And actually, there is an element of, "I'm not prepared to break up the family over my views" -

K: I don't want to have to take on board her viewpoint. What place is it of me to enforce mine upon her?" It sounds like I don't do anything, which in essence, I don't suppose I do. But it's my conscience that I have to live with and that's why I don't push it. Because yes, I could argue the toss. I could show her facts...but she has as much ability as I to go and research things, I don't see it as my job to educate her if she feels the way she does. I know that that's probably sounding like I'm dipping out, but I'm perfectly prepared to have a conversation with her if she'll actually have a conversation without bringing in some moral high ground, but she seems to be unable to do that. And whilst that's happening, it's not going to make me feel any better.

R: Yeah, and I mean, we've discussed a moment ago, actually, that there's all these kinds of moral questions and quagmires and so on, so forth, and almost every day is fraught with some kind of questioning or value judgement.

So, what's the spiritual outlook if you have one, on life? ...I kind of ask this because, you know, Matthias Desmet, that Belgian chap or whatever, he sort of says "a lot of people who go along with this lockdowny stuff view people as just biological bags of meat." There's no spiritual thing, well, there's nothing unseen to use a less loaded term.

So can you tell me a little bit more about what informs your worldview from that perspective?

K: I guess that I would sum it up in that I believe in nature and that is the overriding power and nature will decide in the end. I suppose I'm quite fatalistic, maybe, but whatever we humans do to interfere with something, ultimately, the natural order of things will prevail. And that's what I believe (laughs). But I can't justify it, I can't rationalise it. It's my gut instinct. It's how I feel.

R: I think that's, that's reasonable. And I think with any kind of persuasion, religious or not, it's beyond rationalising; something that *you* believe.

K: I have a spirituality, without a doubt, it is there. Can I vocalise it coherently? No, not very well, but it doesn't mean it's not there. I feel there's a certain arrogance to the human race, we seem to think we can control things and maybe you can control something in the short term, but in the long term, you can't. You're fighting against the power of nature, which is relentless, and nature will not stop trying, just because we want it to.

So there's this kind of, surrender to it, I guess. And that's how I keep myself going. And I might fall by the wayside as part of the process, but ultimately, "whatever will be, will be."

R: Yeah, almost like a kind of a paper boat on the wind or something like that.

K: Obviously, I don't want to fall by the wayside in the process.

R: Nobody does.

K: But you know, such is life, isn't it (laughs)?

R: Yeah. Things are going to happen, that you don't want to happen. Yeah, I totally get that.

[R advises K that the first few minutes of the interview have been lost, because he didn't press the record button hard enough.]

R: So then perspectives on sickness and death, then. So I guess if you're saying we fall by the wayside, and, nature, this self-renewing thing, she does as she wants to, then, it's an act of natural will for people to fall sick and to die.

K: It's what being human is. You can't have life without death. It wouldn't have any meaning would it, to be alive if there wasn't the counter of death. I don't particularly fear death to the point that it would dictate me hiding myself away from COVID, but I don't want to go running, embracing it,...it's not like that.

It's not something that drives how I live my day-to-day life. It's [death is] an inevitable thing, and when it happens, it happens. I figure that before I was born, or before I became conscious, it'll be the same as that potentially.

R: Yeah, or like being in a very deep sleep or, or whatever.

K: Unaware. What's the point in dwelling on it when you can't avoid it?

R: Yeah, that's very true. As for a human then, is a human merely biological matter? Is it a walking, talking sack of meat, or is there something a bit beyond that?

K: (Long pause) I don't know...Human beings are amazing. I think it's incredible, that we're here and the things we can achieve. The brilliance and the stupidity and everything in between.

I certainly don't think that we're all just sacks of meat. But even if we are, so what? I suppose the intimation is, that if somebody's a sack of meat then you can treat them as you want to, and I definitely don't think that, so no.

R: Yeah. Their agency matters, more than just their "bare life" matters. Yeah. Fair play.

So if we are in the natural world, and we're within natural law, where does one's sense of right and wrong come from? In the midst of difficult decisions and so on

so forth, how does one decide what the right thing and indeed the wrong thing to do, are?

K: It's all subjective, isn't it? I mean, it's very difficult to remove yourself from your own personal circumstances. And I think it's quite clear that a lot of the people who are making these decisions are not removing themselves from their own personal circumstances. But then again, they are human and flawed, as we all are. I don't know...I find it very difficult to get my head around, that there are people who should have that power. But how [do] you solve that? I don't know.

I suppose that it's a question that I can't answer, because essentially, I don't believe that anybody should be in charge. But whether or not you could ever run a society without that kind of hierarchy, I don't know, because we've never really been given the opportunity to do that, have we?

R:It's quite an anarchic thing, isn't it? like an anarchic idea?

K: Yes,

R: Yeah...I think that's reasonable. Also, when you're saying that a human is beyond a sack of meat and such, you can't treat them like they are, then yeah, no person should have the ability to stamp on another as they have been, during this past stupidity.

K: Maybe if you looked at it from the idea that within a society, you had a group of people who were considered trustworthy and wise...like a council, as it were, who might discuss problems within that society. It doesn't work like that in modern-day does it? It's self-appointed people in a lot of instances that dictate what is going to happen. I don't know whether or not there is a solution.

R: Irrespective of whether it's right or wrong, as it were.

K: No, I don't know.

R: Okay...there are some rural places, places like out in India and what have you, where they have these sort of councils and the like, but nothing, nothing quite like that here. And that brings with it its own problems.

K: Yeah, you're always going to have problems, wherever you've got people involved, you're always going to have problems. That's the nature of it. Much as I hate what's going on at the moment, and I rail against it, there has to be a certain kind of acceptance that to be human is to have to suffer this kind of thing as well. Because...they want it their way, I want it my way. What's the difference really? what is the difference? There isn't one is there?

R: No, and we're not the first, and we definitely won't be the last. You know, we feel special because it's happening to us, but-

K: It's happened to countless other people over history. My conscience is very strong, and I like to try and live by it as closely as I can, because otherwise I feel very conflicted and unhappy. I'm doing my best to stay true to myself, so that I have a chance of sleeping at night, or for at least part of the night (R laughs).

R: For everything else there's Valium (K Laughs). All right, then, so what kind of drove you to start speaking out, and start outwardly rebelling? Was there a kind of "the hell with this" moment?

K: No. It's my conscience, I don't seem to be able to keep a lid on it. The response of the governments is not right, it doesn't feel right. It's a gut instinct reaction of "this isn't right." It's out of my control, not a conscious decision, it's just happening. It's organic, in that it grows and responds to whatever I experience.

Attending The Stand In The Park is the biggest thing that I've done, compared to how I usually react, which is disagree in my head and try to avoid something. I felt a need to find like-minded people. You could say there was a selfish aspect to it, in that I was struggling and feeling conflicted and I needed some reassurance that I wasn't on my own with it. It came from what I needed, not some moral crusade to save the world. Although that would be a lovely side effect!

But...it came from self-preservation, because I have people who rely on me. And they say, "put your own oxygen mask on before you help somebody else with theirs." I was trying to make sure I was OK, so the people who rely on me are also OK, as best as I can achieve that.

R: Yeah, I mean, fair enough, definitely, I'm of the same bent, "look after Number One, so that looking after two and three is actually physically possible."

K: Yeah. Because if I'm not okay, then they're not going to be okay for sure, are they? It takes a lot for me to come out and do this every Sunday, because I have to gird my loins. "Right, OK then, I'm gonna have to do the socialising thing." I know, it's going to make me feel better, but I have to dig deep to do it...because ideally, I'd sit at home and read a book or research some weird conspiracy theory, or entertain myself with something else that I'm interested in. Perfectly easy to lock myself in my house and stay there.

However, I've got kids, and the way that things are going, I don't want that for them, so I want them to... I suppose I want them to know "at least Mum tried. At least Mum said something." And that comes back to my conscience.

R: And I'm sure they'll look back on this... well, if they think in the same way as you do, very possibly, that's what they will [think].

K: Yeah...what I'm saying is...it's not an altruistic "just throw myself to the authorities...sacrifice myself to the cause," mine is a far quieter kind of rebellion. That is fuelled by self-preservation (laughs).

R: Nothing wrong with that. I think, I think if one were to look through history, and look at people who did rebel, regardless whether it was quiet or not, the chances are they'd find that a lot of them were touched by the same thing they were rebelling against (K: "Yeah").

Martin Luther King, civil rights and so on so forth. Yeah. But he was also black. That kind of helps [motivate oneself against racism]...

I mean, I think people have this sort of touchlight moment of "this is something that's bothering me," and then from there on in, people worry about other injustices, is how I read it.

K: Initially, yes, I'm worried about myself and I don't want to feel fear or pain, and I don't want to die prematurely, but the thing that really bothers me, is that children historically have been protected by adults. And there appears to be a complete about turn on that. And it's not right. It just isn't right.

R: Does this speak back to the conscience, this thing that speaks from inside of you?

K: Yeah. It is not right that we throw our kids under the bus, for whatever reason. We've got to show a bit of bravery and at least try and make a difference.

R: I think, yeah, that's, that's reasonable. Absolutely. I don't have kids, I don't plan on having kids, but I certainly think...it would be nice to leave a planet where it's better with you going out of it, than when you came into it. Do you know what I mean?

And yeah...I've had various discussions [with other people] about how it's actually OK to make a human shield out of children, which again, I've got no personal stake in, but it does bother me deeply.

K: I'm not comfortable with that at all. I really am not. People telling me that "oh, well, the little girl had the injection to protect her dad, because her dad was immunosuppressed." Even if I was immunosuppressed, I still wouldn't want my kids to be vaccinated. It just isn't in me. It's just no, no (laughs)! But apparently other people don't feel that way.

Section 2: Healthcare policy

R: I mean, that's, that's, that's fair enough. And, you know, we've heard...about vaccination bringing herd immunity for other diseases. The Measles is I think, one of the ones has been cited and smallpox and stuff like that.

So I think now's a good time to just jump a little bit. And ask what's your take on vaccination as practise in itself and your opinion on the current vaccination drive?

K: Up until two years ago, I never really questioned the vaccination programme. My children are vaccinated. I am also vaccinated up to the point that you know, given my age, those I was given at school. Since the COVID thing and the vaccination programme, I have become far more sceptical, I have to say, although that's not a popular opinion, and it's one that I keep quiet.

R: You're a terrible person.

K: Terrible person. Because, you know, it's up to people themselves isn't it. You see, I do believe in taking responsibility for yourself. I always have done. I don't expect anybody to look after me. I will do my best to be responsible for myself. So, I'll admit that I just toed the line up until very recently, and if they said, "that's what your kid needed," then I took my red book in, had them done, had it signed, and that was it. Job ticked off the list.

Would I do the same now? Well, I might end up letting them have the vaccination, however, I will have done the research that I didn't do previously. Would I say I'm an anti-vaxxer? No. In terms of the general ones that are given through childhood, I have to say I would really like to have said that I'd researched them, but I didn't. Whereas now I always will.

But there does seem to be...a lot of things that are said about vaccinations that should be questioned...because we seem to have more illness, and more incidence of certain conditions now, compared to previously but there's so many different factors that you could consider, vaccination being one of them, but also reporting of things, diagnosis of things, blah, blah, blah, you know, I don't know.

R: How does it all stack up type thing?

K: Yeah. How can you know correlation and causation? Can you achieve that, when there are so many different factors that are involved? Because...autism, for example, they link that to vaccinations don't they.

R: MMR. Andrew Wakefield. Yeah, that was a thorny thing.

K: Yes. So I suppose this has made me call *everything* into question. I question *everything* now. Which I didn't do before.

R: Tiring, isn't it?

K: Yes, it is exhausting. But, you know, maybe it's no bad thing.

R: No. And then the messaging surrounding this current vaccination drive?

K: Sickens me (laughs). It feels like some weird kind of horror story, that is so blatant and so loaded with manipulation, but bizarrely, not picked up on by the general population. The real facts and the figures are all there, if you go and look for them.

R: Not just that, but they're also official government figures.

K: Yeah! It's all there. You have to go and look for them. Granted, they present what they want you to see, but you're perfectly at liberty to go and try to find more information, and *it is there*.

When they say "it does this, and it does that" ...how can they say that over such a short period of time? You can't say that, can you? Yet they present it as though they can, whereas logically, they can't. And that's just so weird (laughs).

R: I think it's the whole kind of, yeah, the whole sort of "point in time" type thing. They just pick some time that makes things look favourable and then "bam, that's it."

K: It's all so arbitrary, though, isn't it? It's been quite an interesting exercise in realising how statistics and data can be manipulated, subtly, to show something entirely different to what it actually shows. And that's been quite a learning curve, too.

R: There's a saying, If you torture the data long enough, they'll confess to anything.

K: Yes! but it's very true, isn't it? But [I] never felt I needed to be a statistician, but apparently I do. So (laughs).

R: Everybody benefits from learning a little bit about stats. That's my sort of saying. And then you can shout about standard deviations and error margins, to no-one who's listening.

K: It's shocking how they present information and skew it, to get what they want. It's made me far more sceptical, and more careful.

**R: No, I think that's fair enough. I mean, this seems to be very much a thing about information. Information is a big thing. And a lot of people have experienced a pretty profound loss of faith [e.g.] in the broadcasters where they'd normally get their news from. So where do you get yours from, and how has that changed?
A lot of people sort of say about the disenfranchisement from the BBC, things like that. What's the story there?**

K: Up until the COVID thing I, I'll be honest, I scanned the news, to get a little bit of an overview, but again, didn't really partake of it, didn't participate. I wasn't politically driven. It's an extension of not wanting to participate in society to any deep level. From the early days of feeling that something wasn't right, and then looking at Sky and the BBC, which are the apps that are on my phone, and thinking "well, no, that doesn't match up either,

there's something that not right here, it doesn't sit right with me.” It went from there, trying to find different viewpoints.

I..joined Twitter, so that I could look at a link I'd found. There was something I wanted to look at, which meant me signing up, and it went from there really. I now look at all sorts of sources, but the main news source that I use is UKColumn.

I now listen to a lot podcasts for information. People with alternative viewpoints such as James Delingpole, Whitney Webb and Del Bigtree tend to interview people who interest me.

R: He's the American guy who's supposed to be “Anti-Vax?”

K: Yes. but you know, it's the people that they interview. Trish Woods, who is Canadian, has had some extremely knowledgeable guests on her show....(grabs phone) I don't really need to look off the top of my head, do I?

R: Do what you like.

K: Talk Radio was the first *slightly* alternative news source that I started listening to, because I couldn't bear to listen to the BBC or Sky. Couldn't bear it. I listened to Talk radio in the car.

I then moved on to other sources so they were a transitional one.

R: I guess there's certain things that they're allowed to say, and they're not allowed to say.

K: Yes...They're still bound by OFCOM rules, aren't they?

R:Yeah.

K: That appears to makes a huge difference, but I've also enjoyed journalists that are more “conspiracy based”, like The Corbett Report as he's very well researched. The Last American Vagabond, has had some interesting people on too.

[R agrees, and covers his own perspective of alternative news media.]

K: I enjoy hearing a different perspective on a subject as it fuels my own research. I love researching things. I absolutely love going down rabbit holes. And that was before COVID. I've like something that's intriguing. I'm very much “ooh, wonder what that is,” pursue it until I think, “not so interested now.” And then I'll move on.

My depth of medical knowledge is far more than it was two years ago!

R: This is a recurring theme. This is a recurring theme.

K: Yeah. I have this awful feeling that I need to protect myself and my children.

R: Why is that an awful feeling though? Surely it's a parental duty?

K: Because I shouldn't feel the need to protect them against my own government! That can't be right. But who am I to say it's not right? I go back to this conflict, of "why [have] I got the right to say what is right?" You can go around in circles can't you.

So that's what brings me back to "I've just got to do what I can live with." With my conscience, and that's what keeps me going. "Right, OK, that's got to be enough." The fact that I don't think it's right has got to be enough, because you can't justify it, can you? because it's all subjective.

For example, the people who think they're saving the planet and genuinely think that we should get rid of lots of people to save the planet, well, that's what they believe, and maybe that's where their conscience lies. Who knows.

R: The hardest part about all this shit is that there is no right or wrong answer. When you dig deep enough -

K: There isn't, is there?

R: No.

R: So then there's a couple of things to go on from there. How's it all affected the way that you relate to others? You talked about protecting your children from the state. So, you know, let's start with that then.

How has your interaction/relation with the state changed, and then from there, friends, family, colleagues? We touched on family briefly, but yeah, just...if you could elaborate, that, it'd be good.

K: It's silly things, really. If my phone rings, and I don't know who it is, I won't answer it. I think "if it's important, they'll leave a message." I'm far more suspicious of things like that. Sorry, just ask the question again..

R: Yeah, sure. So, how has this all affected your relationships to the state? to friends, family, colleagues, the outside worlds, shall we say?

K: I suppose that I feel somewhat disconnected from some of the people that I socialised with,...I might go for a walk with a friend to walk their dog, and I find that I'm being more careful in what I say, I can't be myself, so I don't see people as often.

Sadly, I have lost respect for people who I respected previously. It's made me more avoidant. I will avoid interaction with anyone that I'm not comfortable with. (long pause) That's really what it's done. It's made me more avoidant.

R: Yeah, I understand. I've had a similar kind of experience, but it's about you, not me. Yeah. I keep polite good interactions with people.

K: Yes, I do what I need to do, but generally, I keep myself to myself. And, you know, my natural state is to keep myself to myself, I don't need a huge amount of social interaction. It's just nice to have a little bit. I'm not thinking, "I'm lonely" all the time, I've never been like that. It does sadden me that my relationship with these people has changed, I suppose because of how I perceive them now.

I'm disappointed that the people that I thought were intelligent, caring and like-minded, aren't quite as intelligent, caring and like-minded as I thought they were.

R: Something of a grief thing, almost?

K: Yes. There's definitely a grief to it, there's a grief for the innocence of thinking that the things you were worrying about were important, whereas as it turns out, they were not important at all. There's also that knowledge that, some things, are... beyond repair is a way of saying it, but I wouldn't want to repair them anyway?

R: The foundations are cracked.

K: Yeah...it's not, oh yeah, I'm going to build back better on my friendships when all this is over. No, it's forever changed, *forever changed*. And...it's sad. It's sad, but it is what it is, isn't it?

And out of this, I've actually found more like-minded people in one place than I've ever known in my whole life. So that's been a real positive.

R: Good. Good. So then people in general? Is the same thing applicable to that [ed. them]. You know, I certainly when I looked at people, looked at them with a certain degree of promise, and having this internal will and that they wouldn't stand for certain things. I was clearly wrong.

K: Yeah, I think it's that you thought that your peers, your fellow human beings, would stand shoulder to shoulder with you at some injustice. And the fact that society can be fractured so quickly and so effectively, I found quite shocking.

I like to believe in the goodness of people, and I feel a little disillusioned with that. I've also battled with the feeling of contempt that I have felt, and then admonishing myself over it, and thinking, "now come on," you know?

R: Pro tip. When that feeling wins over you, you end up like me, and you don't want that!

K: It's seeing people who are walking along with the masks right up to their eyeballs out in the street, on their own. I have to say that I did feel contempt...because "all these people are dragging us down the plughole with them." Then there are other days where I look at them, and I feel sadness that they are lost to the propaganda, or their fear, or just their inability to think for themselves.

R: Hmm. And that brings us on to something fairly important, which is the messaging surrounding this pandemic. SPI-B released that memo many months ago, "the personal sense of threat needs to be increased," or whatever it was, and I think perhaps some of the things that you're describing, are by design.

So could you tell me about your thoughts and feelings about how the messaging has been played out?

K: Well, it's been psychological warfare hasn't? I mean, I've read the book, "A state of fear," [by] Laura Dodsworth -

R: Is it good?

K: Yeah, it is very good. I have to say that reading it wasn't to discover anything, it was to cement what I already thought. Ironically, as they upped the ante to increase my "perceived level of fear," my level of fear of COVID diminished and my level of fear regarding the state increased (both laugh).

They achieved their aim in that they increased my perceived level of personal fear, but from them, not from the disease. Whereas obviously...it appears that for the majority, it worked for their level of fear on the actual disease. So it served it's purpose. My brain went another way.

R: Something from within you, but that's, you know, that's fine, people are different, and that's why we're having this conversation.

Alright, then, so some more boots and braces type questions. Let's talk about the situation. What is COVID? And what is a lockdown? Can you can you define those, in your own words for me?

K: Well, from what I understand, SARS-CoV-2 is the virus and if you catch the virus, some people develop the disease COVID-19. That appears to involve strange reaction of your immune system that leads to blood clots and vascular disorders, etc. That's my basic understanding of COVID.

Lockdown, well, pre COVID The idea of lockdown was something that I associated with prisons when they wanted to segregate the prisoners and stop them misbehaving if they had some incident; or I would associate it with quarantining people suffering from illness. That's how I would have [defined it].

Now, obviously, it is a restriction on our lives in one way or another, whatever they dress it up as. It is *control*.

R: And how about the new normal? We hear that odious phrase a little bit too often for my liking.

K: The new normal, what do I perceive that is?...It's something that's been planted in people's minds, and then becomes a reality, rather than something that exists in the first place. We've created it by giving it a name. It's contradictory calling it the "new normal" as it's anything but normal, That's weird. It's a state of chaos, of fear, of divisiveness, all manner of negative things.

R: All right then. And so, what was your initial reaction then, when the stay at home or the lockdown order was imposed?

K: I'd say it was probably... My initial reaction was "Oh," (laughs) "really? That's...Oh OK." That was literally it. It wasn't "Oh I'm gonna die!," It wasn't "It's absolutely ridiculous!" it was, "Oh, right. OK, so I wonder what's going on here, then." You know?

R: Yeah.

K: I'd say that it was...almost a bit detached? Maybe that was shock, disbelief? It didn't compute (laughs).

R: Yeah, yeah.

K: I suppose the way that it was delivered, i.e. [by] Boris Johnson, well, he's like a clown, isn't he? It also lent a certain level of theatre to it, that was just odd. It was odd.

R: Laura Dodsworth called it fright night, didn't she?

K: Yes. It was odd. And surreal. Like watching an episode of Black Mirror, and so weird. It was like watching a TV programme.

R: Black Mirror is actually a really good way-

K: Yeah...I felt like I was in a Black Mirror episode.

R: Yeah, they were some very, very strange days I gotta say. So then how disrupted was your life and others [lives] close to you?

K: I was in the final year of a degree, we were sent home, and then it all went online, but that was the least of my worries. My daughter was in her final year of GCSEs, had her exams cancelled and her final year ended without warning. That was all very surreal.

My son, it caused more problems between him and his Dad within the family business, so I had two, I call them kids, but they're young adults, at home, confused and upset. it was chaos. It felt chaotic and uncertain.

I couldn't offer any words of assurance because I really didn't know. I had to be honest and say, "I don't know what's going on, but all we can do is pull together, hunker down and...we'll deal with it as it comes." And that's what we continue to do.

R: Yeah,

K: You just do your best.

R: Yeah, it's hard to swim against the tide.

K: Yeah, it is hard. Yeah.

R: So what about other's responses to these measures? I mean, you've talked about some degree of disappointment, contempt as regards people's Covidianism, shall we call it, but how did the behaviour of others around the time where all this was very new, come out to you?

K: I think that there was... a far more collective, "come on, we are all in this together, we're all worried about it," There wasn't any antagonism, it was very early days, everybody was, "we don't know," because we didn't know, did we?

We were told what we were told, we were shown the pictures of Wuhan and everybody did feel like they were in the same boat [with] the uncertainty and the not quite knowing how bad this thing was.

As time's gone by, people's reactions to it have become more of a problem to me, and you would think it would be the other way round, wouldn't you? But it's not, and that in itself is another flag, that actually, almost two years on from this thing...it's still a massive problem, and people's attitudes to it are becoming more troublesome and more divisive. And that for me is, a real signifier that there is something seriously wrong.

R: So what do you think is motivating all this stuff?

K: I think it is a convergence of ideologies.

R: Is this convergent opportunism, [that] people are talking about?

K: Yes.. I suppose I mean "The Great Reset" that people talk about. It feels orchestrated, there are too many coincidences, I think that there is an ideology of collectivism, of a "one size fits all" way of running a society that is held by certain people, and I think that COVID has been used as a vehicle to push their agendas.

R: Okay. And how do you think it's going to end? How do you think our future looks? What do you think is going to happen?

K: I think ultimately...if it descends into a tyranny of government, which is what the trend appears to be at the moment, potentially we could have maybe 10 years of it.

But tyrannies historically haven't survived, and I would hope that that would be the case this time, because they're sustaining something that really isn't sustainable. To control people to that level, for a sustained period of time, is really difficult,

R: Especially when what you're trying to control is their human nature.

K: Exactly. It's very, very difficult to keep that level of control up. You only have to try and manage a kid's birthday party to realise that there's only a certain amount of time that you can get people to do what you want them to do before the dam breaks.

But...whether or not we're going to wake up one morning and say, "yeah, it's been won!" and we're all rejoicing, I doubt it'll be like that. I feel that we have some dark days to go through before the laws of nature step in and it'll right itself one way or another.

R: Yeah, I mean, every totalitarianism has its end date.

K: Yes. But how long? How long will it last? God only knows. I don't know. Because I thought that I knew more about human nature than I actually do. I didn't think that there would be people sitting in business meetings with my ex-husband last week, saying they thought mandatory vaccination was a good thing.

And then when they're questioned on "well, doesn't that mean that the government could then say that you have to donate a kidney?" They didn't correlate the two at all. There was a complete dissonance of like, "no, no, no, it's not the same thing at all." No, it is. It is the same thing.

R: It's a question of degree and not of principle.

K: It is bodily autonomy or not, you either have it or you don't. But [they] are unable to correlate the two and that is the thing that is going to be the problem, isn't it; that people do not equate one thing with something else, and actually see it as what it is. They see it as different things when in fact, it's not,...do you understand what I'm trying to say?

R: Yes, they see the outward appearance, and not the mechanism.

K: He [the colleague] saw mandatory vaccination as the solution to this problem. He didn't see the mandatory nature over bodily autonomy from the state as creating a whole other set of issues.

He didn't see that at all, because "the government wouldn't do that, they wouldn't abuse that!" It requires challenging people's idea that the government is there to look after them and take responsibility for them and *sort everything out*. People do seem to think that's what the state is there for. Whereas I don't think that way. I want to be self-governing.

R: Yeah, yeah. I mean, understand that I've got a good link to you about the kind of "they wouldn't do that," type thing- Simon Elmer has got some very good stuff on the vaccination.

K: ...I was listening to a podcast, and the presenter was saying, "imagine if we'd have lost the last war, the Second World War, and we had an occupying government. What differences would there be?" And the answer is "not very many." The government is like an occupying force.

[R and K discuss various books that are on the reading list, which segues into a coverage on the origin and fate of totalitarian systems]- K: "People who want totalitarian control, keep cropping up, and keep trying to do what they want to do. And then they stop and then everybody goes, "Oh, well, that'll never happen again." And then it does! And then people are like "Oh, my God, I can't believe there are people like that." And then it's overthrown. "Oh, that will never happen again." And it's like just a cycle of it."

R:..Then why against lock downs and why against vaccine passports?

K: Right. The reason that I'm against lock downs is the collateral damage, which is *vast*. It's also unrealistic and quite clearly not going to solve the problem. Even if it does stop the virus in its tracks, whenever you open up again, it's going to come back because "virus is gonna virus."

Unless you're using lockdown to come up with an absolutely rock-solid solution in the meantime, I believe it's delaying the inevitable and we need to put our big girls pants on and face up to it, but you know, that's me.

I have pondered whether I'd feel differently if I was somebody who was vulnerable with a comorbidity, and actually, I don't think I would be, because I don't believe that other people should stop living their lives and suffer to keep me safe. It's up to *me* to keep me safe, as best I can, that's how I see it.

R: Personal Responsibility.

K: Personal responsibility. As far as I'm concerned, the people who were told to shield, well, they would have shielded anyway more than likely, if that's what they wanted to do...so this idea that we should just throw everybody under the bus for something that is age stratified and quite clearly so, seems so fundamentally wrong to me.

R: Yeah.

K: Vaccine passports, utterly ridiculous, particularly given the data on infection and transmission in the vaccinated that's coming out. No matter how much they try and suppress it, it will come out in people's personal experience.

R: The evidence of the eyes and the ears.

K: Exactly. So at the moment, they might not believe it, because they don't see it and they don't experience it. However, the more people that catch COVID or SARS-CoV-2 or whatever, who are vaccinated, the more experience we're going to have of knowing people who've caught it when vaccinated...I know more people now who have had it since they've been vaccinated than I did before!

R: It's interesting. There's a lot of it [SARS-CoV-2] going around. There's a lot of it going around. My experience doesn't quite match that up, but put it this way: In the last seasonal resurgence, everybody I knew, well, most people I knew weren't touched by it.

And they are now, post the vaccination campaign. Some of them quite badly, as I've mentioned. Has it changed my viewpoint? Has it fuck. Has it changed their viewpoint? No.

K: The government themselves have now likened the infection fatality rate to that of a bad flu season.

R: This was Whitty's initial thing, wasn't it?

K: Yeah. I screenshot it. I thought, "right, OK, there it is." So it's interesting that people's perception of illness appears to have changed, they are less tolerant of any kind of cold or flu-like illness.

For example, speaking to my sister, somebody at her work had got COVID and she said "it really quite surprised me because they were quite ill." And I was like, "yeah, but you know, two years ago, if that girl had said, oh I've had a really bad dose of flu," it wouldn't have had the sinister gravity to it, that you're now attaching to it.

Whereas now, nobody's allowed to be ill. People's perception of illness has become unhealthy. It's been long understood that the immune system, to remain elastic, needs to be used and exercised. It needs to practice. That's how it works, as much as they want to deny it, that's how it works.

So, it's good that people get colds and illnesses, to keep their immune system strong. But...we don't want that anymore! No, we want to take a pill for it. We want to avoid it. We want to hide from it. And that does not line up with how I think.

When I was a kid, it was “you need a bit of muck, you need to go and play in the muck because that's what builds up your immune system.” They had chickenpox parties when I was a kid, somebody got chickenpox: “Ooh, take ‘em round!” That's because people understood what helped build your immune system up, whereas that's gone out of the window now. And if anybody sneezes, you see people's faces...Oh my god.

R: Yeah, I was at work the other day and I had a really, hot chilli lunch and guilty of this myself going...I was coughing and sneezing. Yeah, I just had to say to people in my bay, “look, I've not got a respiratory infection, I've literally just bitten off more than I can chew and I'm suffering.” “There's no viral droplets in this but they might be corrosive, don't worry.”

But yeah, we've transformed sickness into a moral failing. And I'm seeing this all the time. Crazy.

K: Yes...I have a friend who is very judgmental. If she hears somebody has got COVID, “well how did they get that?” And I think, “how on earth can you judge people for catching an aerosol borne respiratory virus?” How can you possibly think that you have the moral high ground to judge somebody for essentially catching a cold? But it appears that some people can.

R: It's the conflation of human behaviour with viral outcome.

K: Yeah.

R: Yeah. I mean, one of the most bitter debates has been actually about the masks, right? So for [from] your own viewpoint, what can you tell me about the purpose of the mask and what's your opinion on it?

K: The purpose of the mask (pause) as I see it, is not what we've been told. I see it as a signifier of “you must stay afraid, and you must show that you're obedient.” It indicates “I'm on the good side, I'm doing as I'm told.” It also reinforces the narrative of “we're all in it together,” and “protect yourself and protect others,” and “look after everybody else.” They have used these moral messages in the guise of [that] it's stopping people from getting ill. Which it isn't, in my opinion.

R: OK. And so what would you've done differently as regards this thing?

K: Do you mean if I was in charge? Or do you mean, what would I have done differently to what I actually did do, in the same circumstances?

R: Both would be good actually.

K: Right. OK. Well, if I was to have been in a position to influence how it was responded to, I think that I would have gone down the same route as the Great Barrington Declaration, the idea of really facilitating those who are vulnerable, to be able to shield and protect themselves. In terms of the amount of money that has been spent, the argument that it would have been too costly. I'm sorry, but ridiculous.

R: Bollocks isn't it.

K: Yeah, ridiculous. I would also have had that life went on as normal and people were in charge of their own risk assessment-much like we have in any other flu season. I believe that the policy of people who are young and healthy catch it, and deal with it and are therefore immune to it is what we need. That is how you reach herd immunity. You're not going to do it through these vaccinations.

R: Especially if they're leaky, which they are.

K: Exactly. You're not, it is always going to mean you're going to catch it at some point. The vast majority of people will recover from catching it which is essentially what Sweden did. Personal responsibility. But that's because that's what suits me, because that's what I like, and I believe in, you know?

R: Yeah, yeah.

K: What else did you ask? If everything was the same and it had all played out, I would have tried harder to not wear a mask. It bothered me so much. I really felt like I was living a lie because I didn't agree with it and I didn't believe in it, but I was doing it because [of] the fear of confrontation.

And I gave myself a real tough time about not standing up for what I believed in, so if I had my time again, I would try and make myself do that, because it troubled me terribly. It really, really did.

[R talks about his own mask experience]

K: Yeah. Also, at first, I didn't see my parents....it wasn't for long. A few weeks went by when I didn't see my parents, and then eventually, I thought "this is ridiculous." And when I read that, I could [as] part of the exemptions, I could be going round to see them and it would...because genuinely, they're in their 80s and they needed some help. I would do that differently as well, because I felt it...it's just terrible. Absolutely terrible that I was frightened of going to see my own parents even though they needed me to go round.

Not just physically, because my dad does cope well, but mentally. My dad who cares for my mum, he needed me to go over and spend a bit of time and have a chat.

R: No, it's it's been pretty bad. What they've made people, and *who* they've made people fear...I'm not certain I'll be seeing my grandmother again, even though she's made it this far.

K: Yeah. How sad is that? My dad said..."I'm 80 for God's sake. What are we protecting me from? I'm missing out." Who are we to tell our elderly that we're not seeing them for their own good?...who gave us authority?!

R: It's a very simple thing to do when you treat humans as bags of meat.

K: Yeah. It's like we infantilised our elderly population.

R: That we did. Well, we infantilised all of our population. Them especially.

K: Yeah, them especially. That is just abhorrent isn't it? It's so appalling. So appalling. Obviously, if my dad had said "No, don't come round, I'm scared." I would have respected his decision. But that's not a great situation, because that shouldn't have happened either. But...all the "don't kill granny" and all the stuff with the kids and school. Oh, my God, the whole thing's just been a moral cesspit.

R: I don't often use the word evil, I don't really believe in it, in a practical sense, but what they have done...people are inherently plastic. And they have gone and destroyed the trust inherent within us, this non-aggression thing. So from now, the default position is not "ah that person is probably OK," it's that they are a threat. That's not a good position to be in.

K: No, it really isn't. It really isn't.

[R and K talk about the speed and logistics of interviewing]

Section 3: General outlook and other remarks

K: I feel though that I've not really...I don't know. I feel like I've said, a lot "I don't know?" Because genuinely, I just don't know. I...overall, I have this gut instinct, that this is wrong, that evil is walking amongst us, and, you know, we are going to see some real shit over the next few months.

That is how I would sum up.

R: Well, why do you see your saying "I don't know," as a bad thing?

K: Purely because I can't give you... You know, how sometimes people say things, and you think "oh my God, that's just so amazing." I feel that I'm sitting on the fence. And I don't mean to, but I genuinely am very much "you do you, I'll do me. Live and let live."

And there's even room in there for tyrants, because if you believe something, you believe something, don't you? I battle with the "how do you say which is right and which is wrong?" Because there is merit in some of the stuff, in a weird way?

Yeah. If you imagine...this is coming from a climate change [perspective], because people are saying, "it's because of climate change." You could come at it from the view that we are living on a planet with finite resources and perhaps it is right that we are not using them willy nilly and there is some control over it.

The method which they are using, if that's what they're doing, is brutal. But how else would you do it? My issue is with the self-appointed people who quite clearly aren't doing without, and have no plans of doing without, at the cost of everybody else.

The ideology behind taking care of resources is a good one. The implementation of their policies to enact it aren't good. So, there is merit within certain ideas. When they say "oh, it's to control, it's this, it's that." Well, maybe there are some elements of human behaviour that need controlling.

The problem is how they are trying to control it. But then you consider "how do they then, how do they stop people doing things? How do you choose between who gets to have a gas boiler and who doesn't?" You know, it's a real moral-

R: Quagmire.

K: Yes.

R: Well, yeah. But I think it's important to acknowledge that we don't know, right? In my view, when somebody is absolutely certain about something, it's more than likely the reason for their certainty is they haven't appreciated the blind spots in their arguments. And if they're utterly, utterly convinced of something, there's probably a few assumptions in there and a few blind spots that have been glossed over.

The whole purpose of this is to sort of try extrapolating a few trends to see how people all the way that they are on this side, and to humanise them. Last time I checked, you've not got two heads. You didn't have a breakfast of babies. You know?

K: No?

R: Oh shit.

K: I believe the way that I feel comes from a good place. I don't hate my fellow humans. I don't hate those that don't agree with me. I do see that maybe they would think in a certain way and if I think in a certain way...what position am I in to judge them? It's a very difficult thing to reconcile in my head, which is why I say a lot of "I don't know."

R: Again, I think there's there's no problem again...it's acknowledging the uncertainty of these things.

K: Yes, there are some things that are my hill to die on and bodily autonomy is one of them. This sounds dramatic...if they said that I had to have the vaccine, I think they'd have to physically drag me from my home and do it. I wonder "at what point would they get me to present myself to receive that thing?" I don't know.

Would they have a noose around my daughter's neck? How would they do that [coerce K successfully]? At what point? Bodily autonomy, to me, is paramount. It would feel almost like being raped or something. I feel so strongly about it.

R: Well, I think the Latin "rape" is "to take." It is to take something by force. Yes, I mean, the two are not *quite* the same thing, but something is been taken.

K: Yes, it's just that...Oh, awful. Awful.

R: And after all, if you are being injected like a piece of meat, what else can they do to you with impunity?

K: Yeah, right...just the thought, the thought that my life is dictated by presenting myself for a medical procedure every few months at somebody else's diktat, it's not a life I want to live anyway.

Are they are going to get...to the point where the people have not got anything left to lose? That's when it gets dangerous.

R: That might be coming in certain lands?

K: That's what I see too.

R: And, and I guess we'll find out. Yeah. So is there anything that you want to ask me on the record?

K: No, not really. Sorry!

**[R and K talk about R's motivations for interviewing, these will be covered later]
---ENDS---**