

## One & Other Project

*Hello my name is Emma. I'm interviewing you on behalf of the Wellcome Trust and One and Other, it's the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2009 at 23 minutes past 2 in the morning, can I please ask you for your full name, your date of birth and where you are from [interviewer's voice is very quiet]?*

My name is Kevin Thomas Murphy, I'm 46 years of age and I come from West Drayton in Middlesex.

*How do you feel now?*

How do I feel now? Quite tired [chuckles]. Not used to being up this late or early but, yeah I'm looking forward to getting on the plinth and reading my book.

*Can I ask how you found out about the project?*

I was looking on the internet and I did know about the fourth plinth. I don't know where I heard about it, but then I found out people were applying to go on it and I thought 'Oh I'll have a go' and that's it really so, here I am.

*And how did you feel when you got given a place?*

Quite excited and then a bit of panic set in because I realised I didn't have anything to do up there. But I'm looking for work so I'll try and use it to look for work. I'll use it to advertise myself. I'll just put my phone number up saying I need work, I'll do anything really, so.

*So you are unemployed at the moment?*

Yes and that's a full time job like looking for work, so.

*How did you come to be unemployed?*

Umm [pause] how did I come to be umm? I was let go from my last job which was over a year ago. I was fork lift driving and haven't done anything since. I used to do a lot of courier work in London on a motorbike but I sort of got a bit, but I sort of got too old for it, and I still like motorbikes and if I had done couriership there would be no fun in riding it anymore.

*Where did you grow up?*

Well I was born in Windsor and I haven't really ventured any further than [chuckles]. I haven't really ventured very far from where I was born, I'm still around that area.

*Could you describe it to somebody who's never been there, could you describe the place?*

Lots of trees and hills [giggles]. Yes it's quite annoying with the aeroplanes flying over, but on the M4 but it's quite, it's all right.

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*And what was your childhood like there?*

Umm, quite difficult. Umm I left home when I was about 14 and I used to sleep rough around Hither on Hither heath [?] and I've been homeless quite a lot and in fact I've only just been housed, and I'm not actually housed, I've got a room I live in and I've been living there for about 6 weeks prior to that I was homeless for several months.

*What's that like?*

[Giggles] Umm I don't like being homeless because you've got no rights; you can't vote, you can't, you are subhuman so I'm trying to fight my way up to get a job although I don't want to train to be a plumber that seems to be the option I keep getting, you know, going to train to be a plumber.

*What job would you like to do if you could choose any?*

Umm [pause] I don't know. I've missed my chances up for the, I'm a bit old now for good jobs so I settle for anything that pays the rent.

*Where does your family live now?*

My dad died just recently and my mother lives in Hither. My brother, I've got a younger brother who lives in Manchester with his wife and two children. I've got two boys as well. One is living down in Brighton and one is living just down the road from me in West Drayton.

*What are your boys like?*

Umm they are well behaved as far as I know. They are well behaved. They are both working full time and well, they're looking, I don't know, they are looking to better things as well.

*What kind of relationship have you got with them?*

I've got, you know, a good relationship with both of them. Yeah we tend to hang out together [chuckles]. I suppose it's, umm, even when things were bad they always had me, two summers I've been there, they are good lads.

*Do you have any hobbies, anything you enjoy doing?*

I enjoy riding motorbikes. I'm not that good mechanically and I tend to blow up engines quite a lot but, yeah, I like riding motorbikes. It's expensive and I seem to spend all my money on petrol and tyres and road tax and stuff like that.

*Do you have a motorbike?*

Yeah, I've got a *Honda Fireblade*.

*And what is that because I don't really know much about it?*

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CBR 900. I've had it for about 10 years and it's got a new engine in it at the moment, it's got a race engine in it that's come out of a bigger bike, another CBR, but a newer version and am having great fun on it.

*What got you into motorbikes in the first place?*

I met, when I was living rough, these group of bikers I, sort of found me, and because I used to sleep in these garages in Uxbridge and they sort of invited me into these flats and fed me and looked after me and I sort of joined their little gang although it wasn't a gang in the same way as a lot of most cycle gangs. But yeah, they all had bikes and they sort of got me interested in motorcycles.

*What was it about motorcycles that intrigued you?*

[Pause] Umm I don't know they were all into, back then, they were all into Harley Davidson's and it was all like big choppers and stuff like that whereas I was more into fast motorcycles and it doesn't matter, I don't really like the Harley Davidson's.

*Have you told anyone that you are going on the plinth?*

Umm both my sons know I'm going on the plinth and a couple of people I've put it on *Facebook* that I was going on there. I didn't say what time so I didn't want people to think I was an idiot any more of an idiot that I am rather.

*And how did people react?*

I don't know . They've sort of like, they are glad that I am going on it because I suppose they expect me to sing or dance or something [chuckles], and I should mention a couple of them might look at it, they won't look live because it's a bit late but they'll look tomorrow and see what I got up to.

*Have you ever done anything like this before?*

[Pause] No, no.

Did the artist's concern to democratise art in this project have anything to do with you applying?

No [chuckles]. I wasn't aware of the artist's work until recently and I've only just found out a couple of things he's done like that, the bird of the north is it? Up in Newcastle?

*The Angel of the North.*

The Angel of the North, yeah, a man with aeroplane wings so yes it's quite a big thing now.

*What's life like on a day to day basis at the moment?*

What's my life like?

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Yeah.

Umm, well at the moment all I'm doing is I'm going into Uxbridge every day and looking for work on the computers and that, and I'm applying for jobs that I can't get and I go to interviews that [chuckles] I know I'm not going to get the job at but you know I can stand there with a sign saying [incomp] 'I'll do that'.

*Do you find that having slept rough affects you in any way?*

Yes, because I can give up quite easily. That's the problem, I mean [pause] it's just, it's quite easy to sort of not bother and just go off somewhere.

*Why do you think you do that?*

Umm because I can't be bothered half of the time. It all comes down to things like council tax and stuff like that and I don't see why I have to, I know it's, I don't want to go political but I just feel I don't know I've been on council lists and everything and I sort of feel maybe I should have been given a council place or maybe when I was 17 and I was living rough I should have been given a chance but I don't know I've never been able to have a council flat. I've always had to rent private, my rents have always been sort of double anyone's else's and when I've worked, I've sort of like having to pay hundred and fifty quid a week rent whereas everyone else pays seventy five council rent and that sort of things winds me up.

*Why didn't you get council housing?*

Umm [chuckles] I'm a man, umm, don't know.

*How has it affected you to this day who you are, being homeless?*

I get really wound up when I hear things like, over in Ireland they gave a lot of houses to Romanians and all the Irish people were throwing stones to the Romanians and that but that sort of, I kept thinking why did they house the Irish people first and it's the same here I sort of like feel because I am not a Muslim maybe that might be the reason why I'm not being housed and stuff like that you know, but I don't know.

*How does it feel when you are sleeping rough?*

You don't do a lot of sleeping [chuckles], not in the night time anyway. I used to walk around a lot at night and sleep sort of in the day time, when I was young I slept in churches, in the church yard and prior to sleeping in the church yard, I used to go to church a lot when I was a little boy and I don't know I sort of believed in god and all sorts and when I spent the night in the church yard, my first night there's this guy with me and I fell asleep and he went and so I sort of stayed a whole night alone in the church yard and after that I realised I was safe you know and that I could always sleep on my own somewhere. I wasn't frightened anymore.

*Do you ever go into churches?*

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[Chuckles] Not now no.

*Were you religious when you were younger?*

Yes so I used to, I was confirmed. I used to go to bible lessons and stuff like that but it was, I think my mum wanted peace and quiet on a Sunday and I used to be shipped off to church and then go to my lesson at the rectory and it turned me into a really bad person [giggles].

*What jobs did your parents do?*

Dad was an electrician he worked for the Queen at Windsor Castle and then he went on to work at the Ministry of Defence. He was the best man of known umm my mum [?]. I'm not sure what she'd done, she brought me and my brother up. I can remember her doing some part time work in some art place but I can't really remember, she used to do a lot of singing. She'd be good on the plinth, she'd be singing up there.

*What kind of relationship have you got with her?*

Umm it's not good but that's down to me because I sort of lost, I got angry over my dad dying and I've sort of not come to terms with it all yet and my mum is always expecting me to go around and cut her edge and stuff like that and so I'm there but I get because of the history and stuff, I am sort of like, I get angry about things and why do I have to come around and do your edge, why don't you come around and do my washing up. That's the sort of thing that goes through my head but, my mum and I, we are working on our relationship.

*What's the reason why you moved out when you were 14?*

[Pause] well I don't want to put it all like on my parents or my mum, my mum and dad split up when I was 13 and I didn't get on with my mum's boyfriend and I threatened to beat him up and we had a bit of an argument and I put my fist through a window and I walked off down the street and that was that.

*You said your dad was the best man you know.*

Yeah.

*Why is that?*

He was, he was the man, he was really good, a good man, everyone liked him he really was a nice man.

*What was it like?*

He was a bit of a comedian. He had a good sense of humour, it'd come out with some really ridiculous little line. Umm, he would come out with one line of jokes and

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stuff like say things about his mate, he's a plumber and his mate he's leaving his wife and he went home to his wife and he said it's very Floe [?]. That's the sort of jokes he'd come out with, that sort of thing but all the time, he was constantly you know you'd keep hearing these different little jokes and stuff yeah everyone loved him.

*Did you spend a lot of time with him?*

A fair bit, he lived around the corner from me, he lived in a room only by choice though because he could have lived somewhere else if he wanted to. He had this sort of circles of mates and yeah he sort of stayed with them. He played his golf, he was a good man.

*What happened to his friends at the moment, are there any special people in your life?*

In mine? No, I sort of lost contact with a lot of my friends, they have all moved, they are all doing their own thing.

*Coming back to the plinth, is there anything that you'd like to gain from your experience of being up there?*

Umm apart from the job, I'm not sure, I'm just gonna take this plinth and see what happens.

*Have you thought about the people on the ground who watch you up there what they might think?*

I think they might heckle me and stuff.

*How will you deal with that if you do?*

I'll just read my book.

*And on a more general sense have you got any hopes or ambitions for the future?*

Yes I want to buy a large piece of land and I want to grow things on it, where at the moment I'm sort of held back with, I'm, I will do it but it's a case of how long sort of in the next couple of years maybe, I have this vision.

*Have you ever grown things before?*

No but it was one of my sons come up with an idea and I add it to one of my own because I want a piece of land and I want to put a lake on it and I want to put lots of fish in the lake. My son wants to grow lots of Christmas trees and sell them at Christmas and now we'll get a piece of land and grow things like Christmas trees but if you've got Christmas trees, it's not very good for the soil because everything else dies. That's what I've noticed. Anyway pine trees, you get lots of pine needles on the floor and nothing else so I'll have a little section for Christmas trees and we'll have a lake and we'll have other things, just a vision but it will come about we are nearly done well we was going to build on some land but we changed our minds.

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*Why did you change your mind?*

Because we need to think about it more, so we've given it until next February and then we will assess the situation again.

*Why next February?*

[Pause] because we don't, I don't know why we picked February [chuckles]. It seemed like a good month at the time, February sounds like a good month nothing happening, there's only 28 days in February, yeah February.

*Do you have anything else you'd like to add?*

No [chuckles].

*Thank you very much.*

That's alright, it's really depressed me now [chuckles].

**END OF REC**