

Transcript

Speaker 1

Warning, warning, nuclear attack.

Speaker 2

The Specials remained a beacon of great political awareness and empathy.

Speaker 3

This was the time of Rock Against Racism and Anti-Nazi League.

Speaker 4

We were voicing things, and until they are, its light will be undimmed.

Speaker 5

The cream of the crop, the top of the tree, the specials.

Speaker 6

The combining of two cultures to make something joyous.

Speaker 7

Don't be scared to embrace the difference between people.

Speaker 8

That can't sum up the specials in a few sentences.

Speaker 9

Don't be daft.

Speaker 10

It doesn't matter what color skin you are, how you dress. If you're into the same kind of things, then that's great.

Speaker 11

Message from the people to the people. That's right.

Speaker 4

The specials, they were all seven individuals. A real spectrum of society. Trying to keep that in one band proved too much.

Speaker 12

We'll go towards the water and, um, like a 20-minute drive.

Speaker 13

OK.

Speaker 12

And then on the way back we'll pick up.

Speaker 13

This is a brake.

Speaker 12

God, I hope so.

Speaker 13

Where's the accelerator?

Speaker 12

Jeff.

Speaker 11

Is that the accelerator? That's the accelerator.

Speaker 13

Yeah, on the right. OK.

Speaker 12

The far right is the accelerator. That's the brake. That's the brake. And what's on the far left is the emergency. It's emergency. Yeah, OK. We'll take it slow. Yeah, When in doubt, just slow down and jump out.

Speaker 13

OK.

Speaker 11

Slow down and jump out.

Speaker 10

Basically, it's just world domination.

Speaker 14

What got you back together again?

Speaker 13

I think, for me, it was just I wanted to see everyone again. And, you know, such a big part of my life growing up. And then everybody disappeared. I just wanted to be in a room with everybody and see how we're all doing.

Speaker 8

Terry, particularly, always had gone forward and always had written new music. So he'd kind of exorcised the ghost of the specials and only kind of reprised it on his own terms.

Speaker 4

Limbell was trying to get Jerry and Terry to sort of sit in the same room together and stuff like that.

Speaker 11

Simon Jordan played a huge part in getting us back together.

Speaker 5

I was in Spain sitting there thinking I really want to do things I want to do. I'd started a car magazine, I was doing things in the film industry and other bits and bobs that I really would love. Really would love to put the specials back together again.

Speaker 4

None of them could do the specials. They went out and did various versions of the specials. But none of them could do it without Terry, because Terry had the cool factor. He was an artist in his own right. He'd been through all these bands and made a success of them.

Speaker 5

When I sat with Linville specifically and Terry, I didn't know whether at the time it was forced modesty. But the more I spoke to them, it was like, But no one's going to want to listen to us. That time has gone. No one really is that worried about us. And I said, No, you're wrong. You're really wrong.

Speaker 6

I got the phone call from Limpop saying, There is a possibility that the specials could re-film. What do you think? It took me probably about 30 seconds to think that this might be a really good idea.

Speaker 11

I got six out of the seven bucks together. Part of the reason why we didn't get the old 7 back together, Jerry wanted to do things differently. But the audience, the front of the dance room, just want to hear the music. But Jerry wanted to move the music on. But Jerry, this man, stopped for 19 years. We can't change the songs. We've got to deliver the songs as they are. And I think that's where Jerry made his mistake.

Speaker 6

Yeah, Jerry was definitely the elephant in the front room. But, hey, you make choices. And I'm an adult, so I made choices, you know. End of.

Speaker 11

The Specials did better as a unit than any individual. Individual, the individual. And that's why we're back together.

Speaker 1

This town is coming like a ghost town This town is coming like a ghost town.

Speaker 5

It broke in the newspapers. There was a potential interest in reforming the band. Everywhere I went, people were saying... Are you going to reform this band? Is this band going to reform? We'd love to see this band. When they did, was I surprised at the level of energy and competency and quality that they produced? No, these are first-class musicians.

Speaker 11

The crowd and the atmosphere, it was insane. It's like people waited for 19 years and steals back again, and with the curtain drew and everything, the way the steals designed, the old place went absolutely crazy.

Speaker 8

Terry had a wicked sense of humour. I mean, the original sense of wicked, like evil sense of humour.

Speaker 15

So...

Speaker 8

Deadpan delivery.

Speaker 9

I wish I had put on the tickets, could the ugly ones go at the back? Sorry.

Speaker 8

It was like, boom, you're back there. I was... transported back to 1981 immediately.

Speaker 6

We absolutely destroyed the place. It was really, really good.

Speaker 5

It was just the music that my friends and I listened to, and it had such a reaction in me. So when I thought about trying to get involved with creating a reason why this iconic band with this brilliant music should get back together, it was centered in that.

Speaker 4

The specials always seem very confident because You know, they'd honed their act, if you like, when they came back. You know, that was a chance for them to really shine.

Speaker 8

The audience loved it, so I think that made them realize that they could carry on.

Speaker 5

It was the logical outcome. I did what I wanted to do, you know, I wanted this band to reform. I thought they deserved to be right up there. in the hearts and minds of people. I didn't think that they'd gotten enough of the credit they should have got. And I just felt that for them to be out going on tour after tour after tour and seeing the demand.

Speaker 11

Getting ready for showtime, the very first gig on the Encore Tour. Wow, can you imagine, right? What do you think in here?

Speaker 9

White is white What's black and cover Together we'll be When war is over Black skinned.

Speaker 16

Blue-eyed boys Ain't gonna fight no war.

Speaker 15

One step at a time I.

Speaker 16

Go out on Friday nights And I come home on Saturday morning I go out on Friday nights
And I come home on Saturday morning I go out on Friday nights And I go home on
Saturday morning.

Speaker 9

Come home on Saturday morning Cut the corner.

Speaker 11

Cut the corner. Shark, man. It's a steering wheel, man. Yeah, this is brilliant. I love this. I
like the danger of it, it is dangerous. Make sure when you're going to do emerges, there's
tip so I can jump out before you do the emergency.

Speaker 13

Hear that power?

Speaker 11

Yes, yeah, the power. Yeah. Oh my God, amazing power, yeah.

Speaker 13

Where's the brake?

Speaker 17

At one stage, a crowd surrounded Lewisham police station and set fire to a motorcycle
belonging to a member of the press. Under police pressure and knowing that the
National Front were no longer around, the crowd dispersed.

Speaker 11

I would say, through Musical, it would bring people together. That was a challenge,
because at the time you have, like, sort of the National Front, you know, there were
dividers. And we're trying to unite people, you know?

Speaker 3

Obviously, this was the time of Rock Against Racism and the anti-Nazi league. Those
specials were sort of parallel to that.

Speaker 11

Important? More than important, brother.

Speaker 17

This is the beginning, not the end.

Speaker 5

Britain at the time, when the specials came around in 1979, Britain was broken. Racism was rife. The country was in disarray. As the.

Speaker 17

Fighting became more bitter, the police used heavy-duty plastic shields, never used for crowd control before, except in Belfast.

Speaker 2

And the specials were like The Clash, like Adam and the Ants, like Ian Jury. Everyone seemed to be kind of emanating from these places. So they were like beacons of hope in this kind of quite austere, cold, Thatcherite environment.

Speaker 17

Police plans for the National Front remained a secret. They sealed all street entrances, and members of the National Front lined up quietly in a side rd. There were about 1000 of them.

Speaker 11

I'll tell you a story about this one guy, never talked to a black guy before, and he was a National Front supporter. After me sat down at a drink at the hotel bar, right, and we chat and chat, right, he shook my hand, he goes, I had no idea, you know, 'cause obviously the trend at the time and the way the National Front was recruiting, we had to smash that recruitment, and we want all that audience to come to us. You're welcome, you're welcome there, you're coming with love.

Speaker 17

At one point, ammonia was thrown at policemen.

Speaker 4

They're single, Gangsters, so it had the specials on one side versus the selector. The selector, ostensibly being Neil Davis at that time, which was an instrumental that he had recorded two years before. And we went from there. Then we were out sort of supporting the specials, the F Club in Leeds, all these little clubs up and down the country. One of them, Elvis Costello, was there. He trod on my toe. That was my main kind of exchange I ever had with him.

Speaker 3

Gangster's record was that I... I thought it was really imaginative.

Speaker 8

I'd never heard of specials till I heard Gangsters on the radio. I thought, Ooh, what is that? That's wicked. I really liked it.

Speaker 7

You just sort of hear something and you react to the energy. It comes out the speaker and just grabs you. Gangsters was like that. It just sort of made you stop. And at that moment, nothing else really kind of exists. You're just sort of in that space with that sound.

Speaker 15

Why must you record my phone call?

Speaker 3

I was familiar with that music. I loved the way they had overlaid it. The idea of making another form from an existing musical form was really only heard in jazz. So I was intrigued by that. Just standing back from the excitement of actually seeing them on stage was, of course, was a whole other thing.

Speaker 15

Dread to think What the future of friends When we're in your dance.

Speaker 6

When we recorded Gangstas and we thought about how we would progress, it was like, Well, we need our own record label. Why don't we do that? So it's like the English equivalent of Tamla Motown or something. So it was like there was this quest to find like-minded groups, which we did with, you know, Madness, Selectra, and The Beat. We'd carry more weight if there was a movement, if there was more than one group.

Speaker 15

Love while I'm talking # All the covers gates all your guitars # And catch 22 says it all...

Speaker 10

Well, basically, we want artistic control. We want to stick out on our label what we want to stick out on our label. you know, relevant of what it is. There are a few bands and we all needed an identity. I mean, the music and the clothes, but I mean, with the label, it's a stronger thing. It's a whole movement.

Speaker 2

For some reason, I've managed to get a ticket to go to a filming of Top of the Pops. You imagine what that was like for a kid who was obsessed with everything about Top of the

Pops. I managed to stand in front of Terry, you know. story I told him many times, trying to reassure him I wasn't a stalker.

Speaker 3

I probably heard gangsters on the radio. I have a sort of memory of that and thinking this was something that really caught me.

Speaker 11

A few run-through, right in the studio. Cut it. That was it. That was a fantastic record.

Speaker 16

Stop your messing around.

Speaker 6

Elvis Catello's manager was Jake Riviera, and our manager, Rick Rogers, worked with Jake Riviera previously. So it was the old boy network.

Speaker 3

I came up with the idea that I might try some production and make sure something really vivid. got on tape.

Speaker 6

And we thought that was a good idea, because he wasn't like, you know, a big-named, heavy-handed producer who would come in and say, you know, Change this, change that, you know, Do this, do that.

Speaker 3

I got to the gigs and made my mental notes, and maybe even a few real notes, and I kind of knew what we were supposed to do, and we shouldn't take too long doing it. There wasn't the money to do it. A long, intricate... piece by piece recording, we had to try and grab it all at once.

Speaker 7

Producing the first album, he sort of said, oh, you know, they were doing everything wrong, but it sounded right. He didn't sort of change it, he just recorded it as it was.

Speaker 3

That kind of held with the idea that it should have the bright attack of a punk record while playing the rhythms. If it was too rooted, like a roots reggae record, then it would just be mistaken for that and people wouldn't dial it in. I also wanted the voice to be really clear because the lyrics were so important.

Speaker 11

We drunk a lot and... and smoke a lot of weed. So the first record was like that.

Speaker 3

I guess somewhere along the way, Jerry, who's a little bit younger than me, started to write these songs. He also, just from the age they were, they came out of punk bands and the attitude of punk bands.

Speaker 6

These are songs about, you know, social issues.

Speaker 3

They'd started out with a comment on the record business. which was about their own tribulations. And then Too Much Too Young was certainly a portrait of something young people go through together, having a baby, and you wonder whether you should have done that.

Speaker 11

It was the best decision we made to have Elvis. Elvis was blowing up as well, you know? And I mean, he understands the music and the sun where you're coming from. Watching the detective, he understood that. And he was the best person for the band.

Speaker 3

Everything was done on a tight budget, on the compression of time. If the air went out of it any one day, we'd just stop and do a different song and come back to it. But most of the time, we got the songs pretty quick, as I remember. I don't remember there being a lot of angst about. Whether it was the version, it was mostly catching it this side of it going too much like the live version and getting it to the pitch where it could sound like it was happening on stage, but it was still kind of had the clarity that you needed to make it a record.

Speaker 7

When you look back at that first album, the first singles, just so much great energy, and the lyrics, just totally compelling.

Speaker 3

All of these words were being delivered by Terry Hall, and Terry Hall was 19, I think, when we made that record.

Speaker 18

A lot of your lyrics deal with... the social and political conditions in England.

Speaker 10

They're subjects to sing about. We've got to sing about something, whatever it is, and we chose to sing about social problems.

Speaker 3

The song that Chrissie Hines sang on, though she really, her voice is, like, so important to the arrangement is a nightclub. Nightclub You know, she's hitting that long note with the vibrato, and it's like, it's making the chorus open up like this.

Speaker 4

Well, it draws you in. I mean, the way the bass starts.

Speaker 6

Something on my grave start, you know. Great bass line.

Speaker 11

We went into record nightclub because Jerry's idea is like, make a record that the BBC is going to ban. So, you know, in the lyrics, all the girls are slags or the beer tastes like **** right? The BBC's not going to play that. So by having it ban, Jerry just thought, that's a great way to start. Have your first single ban. And we get a lot of mileage out of it, you know?

Speaker 4

Nightclub to me was the epitome of the specials. when they were just-- it was just raw, and it was just raw energy just coming off the stage. And everybody had a place in that song. And it's a brilliantly constructed song. If anything that captured the time that we were living through, then it has to be that.

Speaker 15

Everybody having good fun? Everybody party.

Speaker 3

I put a piece of metal that I found out in the street on the step and hit it with a broom handle, and we doubled the snare drum with that. So if you listen on Nightclub, there's kind of this kind of clanking sound that goes along with it. Very primitive things that you would do now with a sample, but we were doing them live. That was as much as I ever produced them. It was a decent amount of comedy, moments that you have to have in studios to break it down, you know. There used to be a store on Fulham Pass Road where you could buy replica guns in those days. That was just so you could walk in and you could buy a replica machine gun. They looked pretty convincing. And Neville

decided to go and buy a revolver one day and came into the studio in a gun stance, came off the street, said, Freeze Costello and fire the gun.

Speaker 11

The best of my life was when we did the first album with Elvis Costello. Yeah, I didn't like that. You didn't like that? No. Well, I like it because, you know, I was drinking a lot more, and we're under the influence as well.

Speaker 6

I was drunk once when we did this.

Speaker 11

It's Roddy's fault. It's Roddy's fault.

Speaker 1

You were all...

Speaker 11

Merry.

Speaker 13

You were all merry, yeah.

Speaker 11

You go away, you was never there.

Speaker 13

I didn't drink.

Speaker 11

You only have awful lager, that's all you had.

Speaker 13

But I do remember... First time in America when all of you, except me, experimented with drugs.

Speaker 11

I remember when I, yeah.

Speaker 4

First albums are always the purest energy of what it was about.

Speaker 11

And I think Elvis captured it and conducted us in the best way. He got the vibe.

Speaker 6

He knew what we wanted to sound like, and it was just a question of facilitating that, really. Not like we were cats that needed herding, but it was like just to make sure that we were in the room, you know, Okay, everybody ready? Okay, start recording when the red light goes on, kind of stuff.

Speaker 11

We had so much fun recording that album.

Speaker 6

In retrospect, he was the perfect producer that first album.

Speaker 3

I knew that they were completely sincere without being pious. They had a tremendous sense of humor in delivering some very grave and consequential things that you need to be able to say about a world you're actually living in altogether, because it was never on a soapbox talking down to people those songs. They were always about saying, We, we are, you know, just because you're nobody, you know, because that's what, unfortunately, some forces in That's society with darned people down here.

Speaker 8

They used to encourage people to get on stage with them at the end. So there would be a group of maybe 10 musicians on stage and then another 100 people who climbed on stage from the audience. Let.

Speaker 15

This be a place to be.

Speaker 2

Passion for existence and their sensitivity to the dirtiness and unfairness of life. But at the same time, elevating all of that into this amazing, visceral, spiritual thing.

Speaker 4

There was this whole time period that maybe doesn't seem like very much, but you lay down friendships at that time, particularly if you want to be a musician or you want to play music with other people. And Coventry, well, it's 350,000. It is city status, but it feels like a town. And particularly if you're a musician in a place like that, you feel as

though you know all the other musicians who were around. And that was certainly what went on at that time.

Speaker 11

Terry was in a band called Squad. And what we used to do, right, 'cause we had a regular spotter at Mr. George's nightclub in Coventry on a Monday night, and what we would do, we'd get bands to headline and we'd support them. When we saw Squad and Terry's vision and his voice, to decide, well, this is the guy for the band.

Speaker 10

We were one of the first punk bands in Coventry. That's when you were in Squad, weren't you? Yeah.

Speaker 6

Terry, who was like this sort of bit of calm in this storm that was going on, but he was incredibly charismatic. He just grew in stature as a front man.

Speaker 11

The first time Rick would go into a studio with Pete Waterman, Berwick Street. And Pete goes, ***** hell, where'd he get him from? The way Terry just nailed it, one take each song, you know? And that was the voice of the band then.

Speaker 4

This was a new form of music, you know, a new fusion of all the things that were around at the time. It wasn't a mystery if you knew anything about music, but it kind of brought together rock to a certain extent, pop, soul, and punk, and reggae, and Rocksteady, and Bluebeat, and it just put them all into this melting pot, along with these very opinionated people, 'cause, you know, both The Selector and The Specials were full of a lot of egos, but it just produced an incredible time in music.

Speaker 11

So I grew through all those different changes in music, you know, so it was, to me, it was like, What a wonderful idea to put the energy of punk into reggae.

Speaker 3

There'd already been one kind of skull wave in about '64 when Prince Busta came over and a few other artists, and people started to copy. As best they could, those styles, it was just another dance craze like The Twist.

Speaker 12

We all do The Twist nowadays, unless we're a bit past it.

Speaker 6

I think Jerry bought this Prince Buster album to rehearsal one time and said, Okay, this is what we're going to do. Silverton, our original drummer, quit.

Speaker 11

'Cause Silverton left the band, and that's how John Bradby joined the band. If you listen to the way John plays drums right, you'd think to yourself, Who does most of the improvising in the band? Usually the guitar player or the keyboard player. Not with this band. Brad, you listen to his playing and all his drumming, he's always improvising. That's what made a special sound.

Speaker 6

He's one of the few, you know, white guys who could play reggae competently, but he could also play rock'n'roll as well, and he had a good swing.

Speaker 8

I used to join them occasionally. After the Body Snatchers split, they were playing at Hope & Anchor, which was for blanket coverage. And I was asked to come down and sing on stage. And it's really funny. There's footage of it, and they get the footage out... ..and, Oh, yeah, look at this. Unbelievable. And I look at it, and I just think, Oh, my God.

Speaker 6

Introducing Scar was the big thing. We'd played these... Sort of like a punk song, then we'd play a reggae song. And so it was like two separate bands on stage. It wasn't sort of working. But Scar was like the unifying factor. That was when The Specials started to become The Specials.

Speaker 3

Roddy had exactly what was needed for that combination of personalities. He's in the band doing what he does.

Speaker 6

Roddy was the punk rocker.

Speaker 11

Roddy, by his wonderful songwriter, wrote Little Rich Girl and that Amy Wynose covered. Lovely song.

Speaker 6

Neville didn't arrive to occur quite late on, and he was this kind of wild man on stage. He was like this incredible force of nature.

Speaker 3

Ringmaster and the rabble rouser and all of that.

Speaker 11

Neville, visually, he was the dynamite. He was the guy that he put him on the stage, and the whole room lit up through Neville, visually, and his energy was just absolutely amazing. Really a wonderful entertainer.

Speaker 9

Thank you.

Speaker 4

I never used to scale the PA stack, and they were pretty wobbly in those days, and all, sort of various old bits and pieces work together that may or may not work. But he used to scale these things every single night, shirt off, muscles rippling. He did that in the middle of the set. And he not only did that, he sung Monkey Man. I mean, he would play that to the hilt straight at them. And I've never seen anything done on stage as brave as that. That was a statement. That was an almighty statement.

Speaker 8

Most of the gigs I've been to are for, like, the skinny white dudes with the guitars. And then there was these guys, and I just thought.

Speaker 6

What are you all about?

Speaker 8

I mean, it was all a bit, it was all a bit weird. Some of them were middle class, some of them were art school, some of them were, sort of proper West Indian geezers. And then there was like these kind of, this kind of white working class element. My initial impression, I suppose, is like, I was trying to work them out.

Speaker 6

What are you all about? I think there are two sorts of groups, you know what I mean? There's the groups where everybody's mates at school and they think, we're great mates, we want to stay together. What can we do to stay together? I know we'll all learn musical instruments and we'll become a pop group. So there's that sort of group. Then there's the other group where there's the guy who has the idea. You go, right, I've got

these songs and I need a drummer, I need a bass player, I need a guitarist, so you, and you. And that was the specials. We ended up seven very different people that were sort of unified by this music. But it took a long time to get it together. So it wasn't like instant stardom. It was a real struggle. The overnight sensation after seven years.

Speaker 4

I think that what we benefited from in terms of bands that were coming together, you know, both black people and white people and making a kind of music, was we had the opportunity to listen to each other's music. People, you know, rub shoulders with each other at school. There was this wonderful place called the Holyhead Youth Centre, where a lot of those people that were in the specials or in the selector had come together in previous incarnations of bands. And eventually it all coalesced out into those two particular bands.

Speaker 1

Are you ready for this?

Speaker 11

I love the new Oris.

Speaker 1

Yeah, me too.

Speaker 11

Yeah, we love the new Horace. The old Horace, oh God, well, the old Horace was never there anyway, you know.

Speaker 13

I've got very few memories of the old Horace.

Speaker 11

Imagine 40 years, and we only literally met Horace last year, doing the record. That's where we actually get to know who Horace was. He was this invisible guy that comes in and disappear, you know? I do love the new Horace. He's proper.

Speaker 13

It changed, Horace, when you wrote, rewrote the third verse. I saw the old Horace.

Speaker 11

Yes.

Speaker 13

And this new... The Phoenix just...

Speaker 11

Yeah.

Speaker 6

Well, thank you.

Speaker 11

Come out of the face. It's just like a butterfly, you know?

Speaker 13

Like a butterfly.

Speaker 11

Yeah. There it is, the new Horace.

Speaker 13

He was a moth.

Speaker 11

He was a moth...

Speaker 6

2019, we released Encore. It was really good. Everybody facing the right way and everybody just, you know, turning up on time, really wanting to play their best.

Speaker 11

I'm pleased with that record. Very proud of the record.

Speaker 6

Universal Music Group took it on board. It was great.

Speaker 7

It was all about sort of trust, really. And, you know, for me to sort of trust them, given everything that they'd done, I wasn't worried at all. How good it was going to be, you don't know. There's always that risk.

Speaker 6

Neville got ill, and he left, and then Rodney quit. So there were four of us left, all facing the right direction, so this will be a good time to do it. Then Brad died. And that was like.

Speaker 11

With Encore, we were sober. we're more mature and grown up and take life a lot more serious.

Speaker 6

So there was just Terry, Limval, and I. But we were working with some amazing musicians. We had Ken Rick Rowe on drums. Nikolai Torp-Larson, who'd been Jerry's replacement since 2008, was really coming into his own. He's a fantastically talented keyboard player.

Speaker 11

He's such an amazing musician. So he's been our musical director on the anchor album.

Speaker 6

Steve Craddock from Ocean Colosine and Paul Weller's band was playing guitar.

Speaker 11

I mean, working with this man has been a blessing, man. That's what it is. Music, love. They're wicked, man. I'm wicked, I said. I'm the best in my life now, you know? Wicked.

Speaker 6

So it was like this dream team of musicians. Okay, let's get some material together. And we did, and it was an absolute joy.

Speaker 11

His name is Nikolai. Thank you. Yes, and he's helped put this record together with us, co-wrote and produced this record with us, and man...

Speaker 7

I think they just revisited a lot of the themes which had inspired them. Originally, they were all too relevant all over again.

Speaker 6

Social disorder, like last year's Handsworth riot and the one in Tottenham, North London, has delayed.

Speaker 5

Nobody wants to take away from people that right to demonstrate. Society is their muse, to some extent, isn't it? It's looking at what's out there, specifically bands like this, and going, How do we reflect that back?

Speaker 3

Terry became such an amazingly confidential songwriter.

Speaker 7

You only had to sort of look at the form and look at what Funboy III had achieved. In the tunnel of.

Speaker 9

Love The tunnel of love You're falling fever In the tunnel of love And think of yourselves as really good friends But you know how it always ends In the tunnel of love You're trauma Don't mean a thing Take it easy Then your jive will.

Speaker 16

Swing Eggbutch, do it Space, that's.

Speaker 9

Doing Eggbutch, do it Space, that's doing.

Speaker 7

Terry obviously went on to the color field, and again, you know, look at the hits and what they did.

Speaker 15

I could be the one thing left And you're out of me.

Speaker 9

So if you decide to change your views I'm thinking of you Thinking of you Thinking of you.

Speaker 2

Thinking of you know the specials was was more a band and an attitude and a thing but some of his songs after that I just really I could relate to them as a songwriter a young songwriter.

Speaker 9

She may be the reason I survived the why and wherefore I'm alive the one I care for her through the rough and rainy years Me, I take her laughter and her tears And make them all my souvenirs For where she goes I've got to be The meaning of my life is she?

Speaker 7

Vegas, Dave Stewart, Gorillaz.

Speaker 13

I knew you could get that kind of Arabic sort of... I've never heard you sing in Windows, you know, like that.

Speaker 16

It's the first time you saw that.

Speaker 13

I started working on Medoranean. Really? Yeah.

Speaker 16

There you go.

Speaker 2

Perfect. I can't overstate how much of an influence he was. It's more like gorillas this way. As he said in our first documentary, he was asked, Why are gorillas? And he just looked at the camera and went, Me.

Speaker 7

He'd been so productive, and his output was so sort of diverse as well.

Speaker 6

It wasn't like it was new for him, you know, that he had a load of lyrics. So it was just basically individuals bringing stuff to the table.

Speaker 7

When I played it, I just thought, Well, they've just picked everything up from Ghost Town.

Speaker 11

I think the time, you know, the one doing the specials, we always have such amazing timing on that song. If we vote for you, do you promise to be upright, decent, and honest, and have our best interests at heart? Boris, it says a lot.

Speaker 16

There are no rocks at Rockaway Beach And all that glitters isn't gold.

Speaker 11

And I think Waltham was excellent because it proved, oh, terrible. These politicians are, and they're lies and what they do, and all we ask them, if we vote for you, you promise

to make upright, decent, and honest? Huh? Have they been upright, decent, and honest? Definitely not.

Speaker 9

Jabbing and a-stabbing Walking the line Shame off the footprints y'all leaving behind.

Speaker 1

We never fought for freedom For nasty little blues like you To come and do the work we do You bring shame on this country but true Embarrassed for you We never fought for freedom For nasty little blues like you To come and do the work we do You bring shame on this country but true Embarrassed for.

Speaker 7

You The idea that A project with Terry, Linvall, and Horace wouldn't be exciting, wouldn't be special. It's obvious to me, you know. That said, I was extremely nervous when the Finnish record arrived, you know, and I got a bottle of wine just sort of preparing myself, you know, and I was just really, really, really pleased.

Speaker 11

That's our first number one album as well. And if you listen to the music and see from more specials to encore, you can see the musical progression. or we grew. Enjoy yourself while you're still in the pit. Can you say something?

Speaker 13

This is what we have to deal with. You see what... where the problem's like, and we have to deal with this.

Speaker 1

We're doing it. Mike, don't do it.

Speaker 7

All right. Wicked, yeah. The L.A. day was... I mean, the whole thing was bonkers, actually. I had a sort of camera following them around, and... You know, it was a beautiful thing as well, but it was also this quite bizarre experience, really.

Speaker 13

It's Wednesday, and we're at City Hall, and today has been in our specials day in L.A.

Speaker 6

We were contacted by Counselor Monica Rodriguez. The specials day in L.A. She suggested that there be a specials day in Los Angeles, and there was.

Speaker 7

When it first came up, I think everybody was just, you know, knocked out by it. And it was really, I guess, to acknowledge the influence and the impact that they'd had on certain bands, a scene, et cetera, out there in the US. They'd inspired a number of bands. that had gone on to be extremely successful.

Speaker 6

In 1990, when I was in Special Beat, we were touring America to this new scar audience. And all these kids would come up to me and go, hey, we saw the specials on Saturday Night Live. It was ***** fantastic, man. You know, but it got repeated and got repeated and got repeated and just became this sort of cornerstone. of what would become this big ska movement. And then you had bands like, you know, Operation Ivy, who became rancid, and then the Mighty Boss Tones, and eventually sort of people like No Doubt. So all these, like, million-selling bands that cited the specials as their influence?

Speaker 12

We declare May 29th the specials day in L.A.

Speaker 6

So Terry and I and our manager, Steve, we went to the council office at Council Chambers, and we were fated by the great and the good and given this big certificate. It's funny because Limbaugh had collapsed. He was recovering in the hotel.

Speaker 7

And Horace, you know, kind of was brilliant, actually. Just made a fantastic speech, which sums it all up beautifully.

Speaker 6

It was great, you know. Thank you, Los Angeles. You have great taste in music.

Speaker 13

It was just bizarre, because it felt like we were on a film set, or it was like a TV scene, and Judge Judy or Bruce Willis to come through at some point. Neither did. It's just a fantastic day.

Speaker 7

It looked beautiful as well, and, yeah, just quite a giggle, quite a laugh.

Speaker 13

We formed our band in Coventry, which is... a small city in the Midlands, and 40 years later, to be recognized by a city 6,000 miles away is quite bizarre, but also really

rewarding, because it feels like it sort of validates what we've done in the last 40 years, and people on another continent can connect with what we're trying to do. That is really important. It's important. The message is important, and it translates, which is fantastic.

Speaker 11

It's a pity that I did get sick because I was dehydrated and all that, and I couldn't get to go to the wonderful ceremony. I was meant to be a mass of ceremony.

Speaker 13

No, I know. I know.

Speaker 11

I would have been, yes. I know. I was sick, sick.

Speaker 6

Fate works in strange.

Speaker 11

Thank you very much, Earth. Thank you. You're a gentleman.

Speaker 13

When Monica announced that you couldn't be there, the whole council stood up and cheered.

Speaker 11

It wasn't like that. It was not like that.

Speaker 13

Everyone.

Speaker 11

No, it wasn't like that.

Speaker 13

They were happy because they were going to make lunch.

Speaker 6

2015, and our support band were Fishbone, who were an amazing band. who'd come out of Los Angeles, the only band I was ever worried about sharing a stage with. Norman Fisher, their bass player, was a monster, monster player. He came down and sat down

next to me before they went on, and he goes, Horace, you don't know what you guys did back in the day. He goes, We were these black guys, and we were into Devo, and we went to see Dance Craze, and we formed a band.

Speaker 15

The man is black, he told me The latest Moscow news are black At the summer cross the Red Sea They drove their ballpoint views I'm the man in grey I'm just the man at C&A And I don't have a say In the war games that they play The Binky Mouse that told the Ayatollah at his feet. If you drink your oil you smoke, we'll eat our heads of weed. I'm the man in grey I'm just a man at C&A And I don't have a say in the board games that they play.

Speaker 4

Well, the clash had played around with reggae. They'd mix that up with rock music, and that was a great music for the time. But what Jerry's genius was, he thought, Yeah, but you could dance to this as well, not just get stoned to it. So he married that up with something which was a precursor to that and really where Bob Marley started. I mean, Bob Marley was a rude boy. So was Peter Tosh. I mean, that whole styling of Walt Jabsko, the whole black-and-white kind of, you know, little cartoon figure that graces many of the two-tone releases, was all taken from that particular image.

Speaker 3

A lot of kids wore variations on modern and later, towards the end of the '60s, skinhead styles. We didn't really have a lot of those in our school, but they were around in that part of the world, and we usually stayed out of the way of them. The specials immediately had this contradiction to that idea that there was something inherently hostile about these styles, because they were a mixed-race band.

Speaker 19

Reggae finds its content in the ability of the artist to feel and to investigate the facts of the society, to appreciate the suffering of the dispossessed and the oppressed. You see, that for me is a stark fact. And the skinhead is able to discover the society in which he lives and to discover himself through the medium of reggae and eventually his relationship to the world at large.

Speaker 5

The iconography and the imagery And the look and feel of this band and the energy that they brought to the songs that they sung, to me, just resonated.

Speaker 6

I think we were in the right place at the right time. Punk was kind of like dying on its ***. The Sex Pistols had split up, The Clash were discovering America, and something new needed to come along.

Speaker 4

All of those things were around and they were available, mainly because those kinds of music had happened 20 years before, and here it was being recycled. I mean, we tend to get this recycling in sort of 20 years. periods, which is when one generation has outgrown the clothes. And so they give all their clothes away to the Oxfam shop and some bright spark in a band somewhere goes, those stay press look good, let's try those out. And then others go, yeah, I think they're good, I think I'll get a pair and some docs.

Speaker 7

I was a big sort of fan of the jam. So it was a sort of short walk, really, from the suits that they were wearing to the suits that the Specials and other two-tone bands were wearing. And so image-wise, it kind of felt like it was in the same sort of area.

Speaker 6

We were just copying the mods from, like, 1964, really, and the skinhead fashions as well from, like, a little bit later. So we were just sort of combining that so you had a sharper look. The op art design, you know, the Bridget Riley, you know, the black and white squares. I mean, that was from the '60s as well. So it was all borrowed from mod iconography, really.

Speaker 11

Smart, state press, you know, two-tone, Brutus, Ben Sherman, the loafers. That was it.

Speaker 3

They had actually dialed in a sort of subculture, you might say, of people, like, wearing these clothes, which I hadn't seen since '69.

Speaker 6

You could buy second-hand tonic suits You know, up Gosford Street. The suit I wear on that first album cost me six pound 50. It cost me more to get it, you know, altered so that it fitted me properly.

Speaker 3

Chalky Davis took the cover shot of the Specials. That's a pretty great photograph. It really caught them the way they were at that moment. You know, all their personalities are really apparent. Black and white photography, it was in keeping, but the color scheme of the label, two-tone.

Speaker 4

You had ourselves, the Selector, and the Specials in Coventry. You had the Beat in Birmingham. You had Madness in London. And then later, I mean, when we all got going, the Body Snatchers. It was all there. The precursor, of course, was the Specials. It gave rise to this movement that a lot of people had joined to. We did an album. And I think we did four singles before, you know, to a certain extent, we saw the writing on the wall and how unruly the whole thing was getting and decided we'd go our own way.

Speaker 17

I know full well the responsibilities that await me as I enter the door of number 10, and I'll strive unceasingly to try to fulfill the trust and confidence that the British people have placed in me and the things in which I believe.

Speaker 3

Probably the most extraordinary record they made, I had nothing to do with, which is Ghost Town. I mean, that's like a masterpiece.

Speaker 11

It was Margaret Thatcher's period, you know? I think we captured all of that beer.

Speaker 2

It was, um, it was like, it was like perfection.

Speaker 4

Tremendous backbeat that just made you sit up and listen with this almost symphonic music going on over the top.

Speaker 6

I'm really proud of it because it was recorded in a tiny little basement studio in Royal Leamington Spa on eight tracks and mixed on a two-track Reevox in producer John Collins' front room in Tottenham and it sounds brilliant.

Speaker 15

All the clubs have been closed down This place is coming like a ghost.

Speaker 11

You know, the clubs are closed down. Can't dance to you anymore, and that's what happened.

Speaker 6

It obviously resonated with an awful lot of people in England, because they all went out and bought it.

Speaker 8

What was being spoken and the experience of the people who were listening to them, there was a resonance between the two, and at the time, they communicated absolutely.

Speaker 5

If you listen to the lyrics, it catches the mood of the moment. It catches the culture and challenges that are going on in this country.

Speaker 6

I don't think there's been anything that's been as socially relevant since.

Speaker 7

I mean, it seems even more relevant today. And the lyrics, you know, they just really resonated at the time.

Speaker 3

Terry's unbelievable delivery of those lyrics.

Speaker 15

Do you remember the good old days before the ghost town?

Speaker 9

We danced inside now, the music.

Speaker 6

So we'd done this gig in Rotherham. We then got on a bus and then drove all the way down to London, where we got there about sort of midnight. And then it's, Right, guys, we're going to do a video. Here's the car. Sit in the back of it, and let's go. So we were knackered, you know, and we was, like, we're driving backwards and forwards the Blackwall Tunnel. I got to It was great. It was really good. 1962 Vauxhall Cresta, three-speed stick shift. Yeah. Crazy. Crazy. So this is the original, apparently, is the original, the front half of the original 1962 Vauxhall Cresta that we used in the Ghost Town video?

Speaker 11

Timing for Ghost Town was incredible. That record can be put in the archives and just sit there. Ghosthall captured a vibe, you know, what was happening. The riots and all that, you know.

Speaker 4

It so succinctly epitomized at time how people were thinking, the problems that there were in Coventry and up and down the country in that kind of Thatcher period of the early '80s. It just kind of... the melancholy and the alienation. that a lot of young people were thinking at that time. It fully encapsulated all of that.

Speaker 3

They should be proud of that record.

Speaker 11

If you want to know about the history of where we're coming from, Listen to Ghost Town, Tell You Everything.

Speaker 6

It was definitely a high point to go out on. This town is coming.

Speaker 9

Like a ghost town This town is coming like a ghost town.

Speaker 11

To me, it just feels like, um... We capture the time.

Speaker 8

A whole generation of people sort of grew up at least having some sort of answers to the world that they were being faced with.

Speaker 20

Would you say you've got an identity problem?

Speaker 21

Yeah. Because no man that was born in England, no black man that was born in England, is not to be called British.

Speaker 20

Why not?

Speaker 21

Well, we've been brought over here and We're put over the table. We've been treated bad. And if a man asks me, Was I born in England? If I am British, I'm not going to say, Yes. I'm not going to say, Yeah, I come from that place that I've been treated bad in.

Speaker 6

2020 was very much the year of protest, Black Lives Matter protests in America, and just sort of general sort of civil unrest that I think was more the responsibility of lockdowns, where everybody, you know, just sort of went home and went mad. But.

Speaker 1

Now you see the light We're gonna stand up for our rights Get up, stand up.

Speaker 4

It was a different time. People say too much that, oh, you know, 1979, well, yes, I mean, that was terrible then and it's terrible now as well. Yes, it is. And all of those things are out there, but we talk about them now. You know, Black Lives Matter movement has happened. The Me Too movement has happened. These are different times.

Speaker 11

Protest songs, we started work on the next album, obviously through the pandemic, two years out. We decided, Well, let's fill the gap in.

Speaker 7

I think that's an interesting record. It wasn't actually what they planned to do after Encore, but COVID came along and all the sort of initial talk and plans that were kind of being had were kind of forced to go on the back burner because they couldn't obviously get together and work in the way that they would normally choose to work.

Speaker 6

So it was like, Well, this isn't new. You know, here are some songs where people had, you know, used music as a form of protest. But that's kind of what the specials were about anyway. Stupid Marriage is a protest song. Too Much, Too Young is a protest song. So it wasn't like anything new, but like, okay, here we go. Here's something that was written in 1965 that was a protest song. Here's something that was written in, you know, 1973 or something.

Speaker 9

Drive them away The wind.

Speaker 7

They are, or were, the archetypal covers band. If you think back, you know, they did so many covers right from day one. So the idea that they did this sort of protest songs collection of covers, you know, I think is particularly pertinent.

Speaker 15

Wind in my heart To drive them away.

Speaker 11

How this was happening in the world. We decided to just wake up here that this has been going on for years.

Speaker 6

It was a kind of interim record, but they all had this sort of theme of protest songs. And also it was another factor in that redefining ourselves. And it worked. And it still sounded like The Specials. There's.

Speaker 11

Bonanza. I live in the city That's so funny.

Speaker 1

Yes, I do I live in the city Yes, I do Made by humans It's like Leicester to Minoris.

Speaker 9

Leicester.

Speaker 6

We wanted to make a reggae album. And I'd had some reggae tunes, so there was music. And I know Terry had been writing. He had notebooks. Him, Limbell, and I were getting really quite tight. We had this sort of survivor mentality. And it was just a question of them we were going to do sort of pre-production work, where the music was going to be introduced to the words, or the words going to be introduced to the music. But then Terry phoned up and said that he was sick.

Speaker 11

When he rang me up, I was so happy. He'd go, Bloody hell, man. I just have to ring him, send him texts, 'cause that's how he works. Send him texts backwards, blah, blah. And when he said to me, You know, you're the only one that I've rang on the phone, I'll remember that for the rest of my life.

Speaker 8

I think Limbaugh tried to call me during the day to say he's dying, but didn't get through, and then finally got through to say, I was walking home from work, and he just said, you know, Terry's gone. And I was like, You what? What? You know, 'cause I didn't know there was anything wrong.

Speaker 2

But I didn't tell anyone anything. None of us knew.

Speaker 11

No one.

Speaker 4

Brave doesn't quite go there, but it was quite incredible, I thought. It takes a certain kind of person and a real sort of strength inside, I think, to particularly the position that he was in.

Speaker 6

Steve Blackwell, our manager, called me on a Sunday, and he never phones on a Sunday. And he says, Look, Terry's condition is a lot worse. And he died 18th of December. You know, what's that? Six weeks later, something like that.

Speaker 20

So today would have been Terry Hall's 64th birthday. So I, along with the Two-Tone Village and a club from Coventry, just wanted to put a ride on as a mark of respect to recognise and celebrate the legacy of music that the specials Terry Hall brought to us and to honour his legacy. We've had over 500 scooters turn off today. Every one of them here were have that same feeling and passion and love for the specials and what they stood for and the music.

Speaker 7

Yeah, I mean, he was, you know, he was fantastic. I mean, he was very considered and he could be extremely funny, very humorous. Yeah.

Speaker 3

He acknowledged and shared with people the consequences of suffering from depression and could both write about it. And at times, obviously, it's clearly burdened him. But the fact that he was able to do that for people who were in that position who didn't have the same voice he had is amazing.

Speaker 11

When it comes to this part now, where I've done with Terry, I just feel I just have to go and talk about who Terry was.

Speaker 8

He had very, very attuned sense of humor.

Speaker 6

There was always something to laugh about. He was ever, ever so funny, no matter what the situation was. You know, there would be a wry smile or some sort of, you know, comment.

Speaker 11

What was he like to work for?

Speaker 2

Oh, brilliant. Yeah, he's brilliant, man. Look, I love you, Terry.

Speaker 5

My relationship with Terry was just two guys, one of them who admired the other.

Speaker 4

He knew how to wear clothes. Certainly when he was younger. Somehow he was breathing other air to the other members of the band. And when you look back now and you look at dance craze, everything was concentrated in him. All the men wanted to be him and all the women wanted to love him.

Speaker 15

Thanks very much. This next song is dedicated salary-fully to the 2 million unemployed. It's also dedicated to everybody who hasn't finished their scampi. It's called Do Nothing. Each day I walk along this lonely street Trying to find Find a future If their options are on my feet 'Cause passion is My only culture. Nothing ever changed. Oh, no. Nothing ever changed. People say to me, just be yourself. It makes no sense to follow fashion. How could I be anybody else? I don't try. I've got no reason. Nothing can't change.

Speaker 4

He was his own person, and very few people actually have that. they're their own person, particularly people in the entertainment industry. There's a lot of people trying to be whoever they think they ought to be at the time, and I don't really have much time for people like that. because they have no centre, but he looked as though he had a centre.

Speaker 6

Manchester Apollo, in between songs, you know, and he grabs the mic, and he walks along the lip of the stage, and he says, Okay, let's play Guess the Fashion Retailer, you know, and he'd look it to the audience, and he'd go, Ah, Georgia Asda, you know, Primark, Matalan, must do better. It was really funny. He never did it again. That was the only time he ever did it, but there was this real sort of sense of humour, sense of fun about him. I will miss that.

Speaker 5

A very talented and kind and interesting and intriguing man. There was this innate serenity about him. Challenged serenity for lots of reasons, but just a very gifted, kind and warm soul.

Speaker 2

Definitely the nicest and the friendliest and the most down to work.

Speaker 4

And he did definitely have star quality. I mean, it was, and I don't think it was any accident that any version of the specials without him just really didn't make it.

Speaker 11

To go on the stage and perform those songs without him, I can't see that.

Speaker 18

Listening to your two albums, there's a marked difference. from the first and to the second. What happened?

Speaker 11

Oh, well, I mean, the bands got to developed, you know? I mean, you could tell probably the next album could be fake jazz. I don't know yet.

Speaker 10

Fake music.

Speaker 18

Yeah, but still, it's a big step from playing Scar and sort of...

Speaker 10

Never played Scar.

Speaker 18

You didn't.

Speaker 10

Everybody thinks we did, but we didn't.

Speaker 18

What have you been playing all these years that we didn't know about?

Speaker 10

Punk rock.

Speaker 18

Punk rock.

Speaker 10

Yeah, it's just an extension of that.

Speaker 11

I think we were the voice of the people. And when you're there and you become the voice of the people, it's a very important job. It's a responsible job. You've got to take that seriously, you know? And that's what we did. If we're going to be the voice of the people, we've got to stand up there, because we're speaking on their behalf.

Speaker 8

People with different skin colour coming from different places, all coming together, making music on stage.

Speaker 2

It makes me smile. It makes me... I suppose cry and smile at the same time, his voice.

Speaker 6

Those scar rhythms are irresistible. You know, I defy anyone to stay sitting down.

Speaker 11

David Albert, you know, when he was a young lad, he saw us, and that's one of the reasons why he wanted to be in a band. You know, that's why he ended up performing Blur, you know?

Speaker 2

I think everyone influences everybody else. I don't think there's a point where you start a timeline.

Speaker 6

I realize how much the specials means to an awful lot of people.

Speaker 8

It was a band that all pulled in opposite directions at once, and really only pulled their resources on stage.

Speaker 4

I think the lasting legacy of Two-Tone Music is the fact that people, 44 years later, are still listening to it, still going along to gigs, and it's still being talked about, and you're able to make a documentary about specials.

Speaker 16

Stop your messing around Better think of your future Time is straightened right out
Creating problems in time.

Speaker 1

Rudy, a message to you Rudy, a message to you.

Speaker 15

Stop me fooling around Ah, ah Come straight right out Ah, ah.

Speaker 16

Better think of your future Ah, ah Ah, Rudy A message to you, Rudy A message to you.

Speaker 6

Who's your favorite special?

Speaker 3

The special special.

Speaker 12

My name is...

Speaker 9

My name is...

Speaker 8

Okay, my name is Rhoda Deccar.

Speaker 5

You'll be able to edit around some of that ***** waffle, won't you?

Speaker 4

You think I know all those things? I got on the bus.

Speaker 9

I just felt pleased I didn't have to sit at the back.

Speaker 6

Okay, thanks folks, you've been a great audience.

Speaker 14

Were you the youngest?

Speaker 13

Yeah, and I still am.

Speaker 16

Routine A message to you, Routine A message to you, Routine A message to you,
Routine A message to you, Routine A message to you, Routine.

Speaker 11

The legacy of the Specials is special. Very, very special. And I don't think you can
change that.

Speaker 16

White is black Black is white Right is wrong Wrong is right If night is Day, then day is
night. Looked all around the world. Could be a beautiful place to love.

Speaker 9

It with us down. Open is closed. Round and round and round we go. Moving fast.