

There`s A Window Of Time We All Have When We Mean Something To People

Kinky Friedman in Cologne, live at Music Hall, December 1999

Introduction by Jewford: Ladies and gentleman! Live from the Music Hall in Cologne: Kinky Friedman! We´re on tour in Germany until Tuesday the 7th of December (*bursts out into strange sounds*) whywhyshnae - woowooshnee! Who am I? I don´t know who I am! Little Jewford here saying I´ve got to go. I´ll see you later (*bursts out into hysterical shrieking*) ahuhuhuhuaiaiaiaiai:

Kinky (grinning): Alright, that´s a good introduction. Thank you Jew for the fine job!

Jewford: You´re welcome Kinky you´re very welcome!

Kinky: Thank ya verry much!

Jewford: You are welcome Kinky!

(*Kinky pretends to stick the microphone up Jewfords eye...*)



Jewford (holds his left eye while acting like crying in a high voice): Waehahahahaha! (*looks at his hand and wonders*) Oooooouuuuuuh!



Kinky (murmurs into his mustache): I was trying to smoke this fucking thing (*the microphone*) instead of the cigar ... A pleasure to be here! A pleasure to be here! Thank you Jewford! Jewford you were very helpful! Thank ya verry much! How about the word that you

learned in Austria? That very popular German word...

Jewford: ...that is a very popular word, that is *(in a fat American accent)* SCHNIEDELHOPPER!!!

Kinky: Schniedelhopper!

Jewford: Schniedelhopper or jumping penis *(imitates the movements of a jumping something with his right hand while smiling greasy into the camera)*

Kinky: We've learned that in Gratz. We played in Gratz and in Vienna and we were on a train for an hour and a half and we passed Mozart's birthplace, Hitler's birthplace and Arnold Schwarzenegger's birthplace - the story of mankind ... wonderful experience for me and Jewford, wasn't it?

Jewford: I loved every moment I had passing through Austria! *(Kinky acts like sticking up Jewfords eye with the microphone again)* Whaaaaahaaaaa!!!! *(Jewford cries out while holding his right eye then to Kinky)* didn't you?

Kinky: Yes, I thought it was quiet amazing. Then in Vienna I was telling the crowd about my favourite dead American heroes. And I said there were Charles Bukowski, Allen Ginsberg, Towns van Zandt and Gram Parsons. So someone in the audience shouted "Bob Dylan!" Who says Austrians don't have a good sense of humour?

Jewford: *(murmuring in a very deep voice)* There you have it.

Kinky: Thank you little Jewford!

Jewford: You are welcome now I'm glaaaaaaaahahaha... *(bursts out into shrieking noises again because of Kinky who is sticking the mic up his nose)*

(Kinky laughs brutish and sucks his cigar while Jewford is holding his face with both hands)

Seb: Well it's your first time ever here I think?

Kinky: Yes.

Seb: And so what was the reason not to come here yet and what's the reason to haven't come?

Kinky: Well, those are two questions now! The reason I'm here is I got on the wrong bus. I thought I was going to a lower baboon's asshole and then...

Jewford: And now you're here! *(more crazy laughters or cries or whatever)*

Kinky: I'm in. But I have done a show ... Jewford! Things weren't like this at the hospital, were they?! *(Kinky giggles, then Jewford does something the camera cannot catch)* Boy that's really unpleasant ... I played Berlin about two years ago at the Passion Church *(Jewford makes giggly noises while disturbing the camera picture with his right hand)*

Oh, Jewford please give it a rest, will you!? Played the Passion Church ... ouuuuuuuuuuh Lord have mercy! *(a woman comes in to serve a glass of beer)* Let's have a little bit of this. We don't want to insult German beer but this is a Guinness - the drink that kept the Irish from taking over the world, wonderful drink. Hulala – hulala!

Anyway, so we are here. Berlin was great and Hamburg was great and that's about all we've done so far. Four or five more shows ... *(holds his cigar up for the camera)* This of course is a Cuban cigar that I bought right here in Cologne today from ... *(shouts out very loud)* Patti what's the name of that cigar store?



Patti: Pfeifenheinrich.

Kinky: Pfeifenheinrich. Great store and of course I am an American I just wanna point out even though it's a Cuban cigar: I'm not supporting their economies, I'm burning their fields! *(takes a deep breath of the cigar)* as I told President Clinton when I gave him a Cuban cigar at the White House three years ago. It's true. Alright, any other questions!



Seb: *What about President Clinton?*

Kinky: Clinton is a big fan of my books. Somebody came by about four years ago and gave me a book in Texas at a book signing and said: "Sign one for President Clinton!" So I signed "See you in hell" or "Years in cry" or "Fucking and freedom" ... something like that. I didn't think it was really gonna go to President Clinton. Two weeks later I got a letter from the White House and at the end of it he says: I've now read all your books. More please! I really need the laughs. So I wrote Bill back and he wrote me back and I wrote him back and we became pen pals for about two years. Then he invited at the White House.

Seb: *You and your father?*

Kinky: *(burps deeply)* Lord - me and my father! Yes. It's alright. Go ahead.

Fisch: *Can President Clinton afford to be a fan of yours? I mean the political correctness...*

Kinky: Oh I don't know, I might need a distance myself from my Bill, you know, I'm not sure ... Well, Hillary is a big fan too. At the White House she met my father and she said: "We just love Kinky's books. So Bill tried to get me a movie deal. As you may know he had a meeting at the White House at that dinner for Robert Redford and Neil Simon. He had a big meeting with Cherry Lansing who is the president of Paramount Pictures.

As she told me the President says my books would be wonderful movies but who do I see playing Kinky? I don't know, I told her I'm too old for that, ya know, too O.L.D. So I told her I see Lionel Richie and so the negotiations broke down and that's pretty much where we are today but maybe a television series or something. Right now the books are fun I'm not killing as many trees as John Grisham and other space takers like that but I prefer to be a little bit on the outside looking in that's a good place for a writer to be.



Seb: *You have been a musician for more than twenty years before you started writing. You've wrote lyrics before but special lyrics of course. You started writing in the 1980s. What I'd like to know is what reason did you have to do that? I think the work as a musician is different from the work as a writer because the work of a writer seems a little bit more lonely to me, you know, writing a book. I don't know how long it takes for you? What do you think about it? How do you work? Sitting home for weeks or what do you do?*

Kinky: Yeah, it's a lonely monastic life style and of course I type on the last typewriter in Texas and the only two people in America who still use the typewriters are Kinky Friedman and the Unabomber right now and it's fun. I enjoy writing. It is a bit lonely and it's easier to do than writing songs. Songwriter ... that's the hardest thing to do in the world: to make with the lyrics. When you hear a song like "King of the Road" by Roger Miller ... I mean you couldn't write that!

You know, three men sitting in a building they could work for years they would not be able to write that song. It takes alcohol and drugs, depression and divorce, self pity - all kinds of bad things happen to your life before you can write that song and when you do it you write it in about ... Roger Miller wrote that song in ten seconds he claims and I think I know what he's talking about. He saw a sign that said "trailers for sale or rent" while he was driving by one

night and ten seconds later the song was just about written. So that's what drives songwriters crazy and I think that's what killed people like Hank Williams trying to do that. Writing books is much easier. It's not a problem and of course my country music career was not doing all that well. So I figured when the horse dies get off and I started writing the books.

Seb: *Why did you come back to country music?*

Kinky: Well, this is a limited tour of Europe. I am not performing in America. I am kind of petulant now, I don't play in America anymore unless a man gives me a lot of money 'cause I really don't wanna do it. The Americans don't grasp satire or irony very well. This whole time in Europe, playing everywhere, we played all over.

We played Norway, we played Brussels - where I formally worked as NATO commander - and many other places and people seem to understand what we are doing. They don't think that I hated homosexuals or hated women or hated negroes or hated Germans or hated anything you know. Were there Americans if I did the same show there will be people walking out or people ... they don't really grasp it.

Fisch: *It depends on who's doing it. But I don't think all the people in Europe understand irony and satire.*

Kinky: Well, I think they understand me better than the Americans. The Americans are very uptight about sex and religion and race and things like that. If you sing a song like "They Ain't Making Jews Like Jesus Anymore" it has the word nigger in the song but it is really a defence of black people and of jews and of any minority, it's a defence of a minority, it's against bigotry this song. In fact it's an anthem against bigotry but the black men don't get it. Nobody in America gets it. Well some people - that's not fair - but there will be people...

An example: I just did a show in Colorado before I started this European tour and I sang "Proud To Be An Asshole From El Paso" and it has a line "the wetbacks still get twenty cents an hour". The wetbacks are people that swim across the Real Grand River to get jobs in Texas because they can't find work in Mexico - As Jesus reportedly told the people in Mexico: "Don't do anything 'til I get back!" - So the line of the song is "the wetbacks still get twenty cents an hour".

So this audience was all white and some of them were very upset by this and they walked out and one woman was praying while I was singing - sick people and at the end I left the stage with the sound of one hand clapping and a fact is they should not have been angry about some idiot with a cowboy hat and a cigar singing about "the wetbacks still get twenty cents an hour". They should be angry that the wetbacks still get twenty cents an hour! That's what they ought to be angry about, which is true.

Fisch: *Does Merle Haggard know that song?*

Kinky: Yeah, Merle likes this song but Buck Owens does not. Buck's the one that published it. So Buck has no sense of it.

Fisch: *This is kind of funny ... this "Okie From Maskoki" song ... I never got it ... is this song any kind of ironic or anything?*

Kinky: It's a redneck song. But today you find a lot of people who hear "Proud To Be An Asshole From El Paso" first. Like this woman somewhere, I think in Amsterdam, she went out with her husband and this Country band was playing "Okie From Maskoki" and she said "They stole that from Kinky! That's Kinky's song!" Which of course it is not.



Fisch: *I always thought this was meant serious and then I heard Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard do it and Townes van Zandt covered it (Okie From Maskoki) that doesn't make any sense to me.*

Kinky: Merle is a schizophrenic. Merle has written some beautiful songs like "Every Fool Has A Rainbow". It's a beautiful song - very sensitive on the opposite site of "You're Walkin' On The Fightin' Side Of Me", which is kind of a kick ass type of thing, you know, a redneck song. So Merle is a man of many sides and so is the Kinkster as a matter of fact. I mean women, ya know, were against the Kinkster in the beginning when we did this song "Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed". In fact we've sent that too Kd Lang for the tribute album, it's a tribute album to myself, it's hard to get a tribute album while you're still alive.

Seb: *Yeah, that's one question in between you said that almost no one gets that messages that you are singing about but the very few people in America who get that special kind of humour are just about giving you a tribute album. What about that?*

Kinky: You raise a really good point which I think is: There's a window of time we all have when we mean something to people. I point out Bob Dylan, when Bob made his first four records. I love those records. I remember listening to them in College and he only sold forty thousand copies maybe fifty thousand he never sold anything like a million. Peter Paul and Mary were selling millions at the same time and that's important to remember, that's when Bob Dylan really reached people and he reached all the right people. People who thought about things and talked to each other and created the great word underground 'bout Bob. Today it doesn't matter, today Bob is like an entertainer, like you can go see Sting or you can see Bob or you can go to Disneyland.

So I think called people have always been important and that's why Charles Bukowski got stronger over the years and some day he'd wrote probably more books than John Grisham and why Garth Brooks - you know Garth Brooks is a Hool-a-Hoop waiting to happen - that's why I called Garth the "Anti Hank" and I pray that his cowboy hat explodes because he's gonna mean nothing. In ten years no one will be singing his songs I predict. No one will

remember who he is and after he is gone to Jesus people will probably remember Tom Waits' music or Kinky's music or Iggy Pop's music. Much longer than Garth Brooks' music that's what I really believe. Even though he has sold a hundred million records, no one will sing a Garth Brooks song to the grandchildren. No one's gonna do that. Because the best thing to do is to die in a gutter if you can or to have it perfectly timed 'til country music death like Gram Parsons and it's too late for me to do either of those things so I've gotta tough it out.

Seb: *So what you gonna do?*

Kinky: I'm gonna try not to be too successful in my own lifetime and I don't wanna be too happy either. Because both of those are the kiss of death for immortality and right now I'm doing a pretty good job I'm not too successful and I'm not too happy so it works out fine.

Fisch: *Do you know why it is impossible to get your records in Germany? I got two in Chicago and two on the internet.*

Kinky: I think the internet is the only way. We'll have some available tonight. There is some nice stuff on the new one with Guy Clarke and Willie (*Nelson*) and Tom Waits and Lyle Lovett and those guys.

Fisch: *Do you have a video with you?*

Kinky: No I don't have a video with me that's on www.kinkyfriedmann.com. You'll get it there. And let me also suggest: Any animal lovers out there please check www.utopiarescue.com! That's our rescue range for animals Check it out, it's a very interesting website and my motto is: "There are no bad dogs there are no good people."

Fisch: *Alright ... talking about dogs ... on your website is a thing about Stephanie DuPont and her dog. You don't live in New York anymore?*

Kinky: Me? No, no.

Fisch: *What's your connection to Stephanie DuPont now?*

Kinky: Very tenuous. She's a real person. The relationship has always been close but my life is kind of a worker's fiction so it's almost like she's an imaginary friend at the moment. The dog is real, Baby Savannah is real.

Fisch: *Most people in your books are...*

Kinky: ... are real, absolutely. Yeah and I use their real names. Stephanie's real but I've changed her name. She writes her own material on the books too, her own lines. Uuh ... the stories are except for a few ...they're pretty much none fictional unauthorized autobiographic.

Fisch: *What happened to the band? (The Texas Jew Boys)*

Kinky: Well, Little Jewford is here, Snakebite Jacobs is in New Orleans, he still plays the

horn, Billy Swan is still writing and making records, Willy Fong Young the singing Chinaman, he lives in Nashville and a couple of others we've lost touch with but the band was great. I enjoyed that very much and I'm glad that with The Texas Jew Boys we've never had a hit because I'd play in Disneyland with the pigs right now.

Fisch: *I think it would help for a tour here if the record would be available. I think a lot of people who know your books would be interested...*

Kinky: Oh yeah! Forces out of our control! All you can do is just check www.kinkyfriedmann.com or buy it at the show but thank ya verry much!

Seb: *Can we maybe talk about the problems and some troubles you had in the seventies when you did gigs with your band? About the lyrics you've mentioned that almost no one got it. So what was it all about? What was a typical Kinky Friedman show in the seventies?*

Kinky: I've forgotten the first half of my life son, I don't remember that much really. I do remember that the audience when we first played in New York there were just a lot of heavy people, a lot of interesting people: Abbie Hoffmann, Andy Warhol ... everybody you can think of ... Phil Ochs - all these kinds of entertainers and writers were there. It wasn't one of these audiences that is just like kind of a bunch of sheeps, ya know. And in Berlin, by the way, the audience were the same kind of an underground audience like teachers and writers and musicians what used to be called counterculture audience.

It's not people that some record company or radio station have got out to the show. You see that a lot, Jimmy Buffett for instance in America. His audiences they're all just like him: white middle-aged men. They're all wanna go back to the high school reunion or Terry McMillan the black woman writer. All her audiences are black women her age. I think really most of them now are readers because it is hard to get the music. The music is old and the books are new. "Spanking Watson" is the new one out and that's twelve books.

Fisch: *Is that one available today?*

Kinky: That one is available but here at the show I'm not sure but, yeah, you can get "Spanking Watson" here in Germany but not in German yet. The last one translated is the one about Al Capone, it's "The Lovesong of J. Edgar Hoover" but it's got the title "The Secret Recipe About Capone" or something like this, that's the new one. I've talked to a lot of Germans - young people who told me that they read all the books in German and in English, to learn English, which is a merely frightening thought I suppose but why not.



Seb: *What do you read for yourself?*

Kinky: Well, on the road I don't read much. I've been reading about Hermann Melville, the guy that wrote Moby Dick, and he was known the last twenty years of his life as custom inspector number seventy five 'cause he wasn't writing anymore and when the New York Times wrote his obit they misspelled his name. He said that the important books are the books that fail.

Moby Dick failed terribly. When it came out you could only find it at libraries that had sections about whaling. I mean people didn't understand at all what the book was and that's like Van Gogh's work, ya know, Van Gogh's work failed. Jesus' work failed. In fact it still fails because we use Jesus today to win Football games or to start wars which is not what Jesus wanted. Unfortunately Jesus only speaks to people in mental hospitals and we never believe them when they tell us. And now I have to go back to the hospital myself.

Seb: *Alright. Thank You.*

Kinky: Thank ya verry much gentleman! God bless you! May the Lord take a light into ya! And remember those who help the Kinkster - fuck - the Lord helps those who help the Kinkster. And of course if you're driving folks don't forget your ca-har! Heeheehee! Lord, have mercy!



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