

## **Ross King, MBE**

### **Entertainment journalist and presenter**

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**Welcome to Media Masters, a series of one-to-one interviews with people at the top of the media game. Today I'm here in Hollywood, California and joined by Ross King, entertainment journalist and presenter. Born in Glasgow, he worked in the UK for many years in radio, television, and acting, winning two Sony Awards before leaving for Los Angeles in 2000. During his time as an entertainment anchor here in LA, he's won four Emmys and a Golden Mic Award. Back in the UK, Ross is best known for his red carpet interviews with the biggest names in Hollywood as entertainment correspondent for ITV, Good Morning Britain, and Lorraine. In 2018 he received an MBE for services to broadcasting, the arts, and charity.**

**Ross, thank you for joining me.**

My pleasure. I wondered who you were talking about there!

**That's incredible.**

At the top of his game! Are you sure? Let's go to the bottom, let's start at the bottom and kiss it. That was the best advice I was ever given in this business. Start at the bottom and kiss it.

**It seems to have worked!**

It worked.

**Are you allowed to tell us who gave you that advice?**

Nigel Lythgoe. Nigel Lythgoe, OBE.

**Your Rolodex must be amazing. If you were ever going to pop to the bathroom, if you left your phone...**

You just dated yourself. Rolodex?!

**It's because we here in LA. I have to use language like that.**

*Rolodex?*

**What would you say? Just "contacts"?**

Rolodexes? Do people even know what Rolodexes are? Do you have a Filofax? Or a brick-like phone?

**Yes, I did have that in the '80s. Do you do that, though? Because I have five or six words that I deliberately choose when I'm here in America, like Rolodex, or I'd have said line instead of queue and things like that. When you go back to Britain, do you re-Anglicise your language, or do you still say line rather than queue?**

No, actually it's really quite funny that I think I naturally just change. I don't change that many. Obviously 'gas station', and in Britain, 'petrol station'. But if I've got friends here who are over from Britain, I will say, "Oh yes, go left at the petrol station." And if I'm in Britain I will say 'trousers', not 'pants'.

**Trousers is a more dignified word anyway.**

It is.

**Pants is ridiculous.**

Pants sounds like pants.

**It does, yes.**

Pants is pants. So yes, no, I don't. And also I don't think I've got... my accent hasn't changed. It's a really funny thing that I had friends, former friends, when I was at KTLA, one of the big stations out here, and I worked there for about six years, and this friend one time at dinner said, "It's really great that Ross's accent has changed, because when he came here at first we couldn't understand a word he said." And I said, "Well, I'd like to say that I've always prided myself in the fact that..."

**On being intelligible.**

I've been a broadcaster since I was 14, 15, and my whole thing has been that hopefully... I obviously have a Scottish accent, but it's not too strong, and I've always been understood no matter where I've gone. And it was really funny that we actually found the tape of me on my first broadcast on KTLA, which sounded exactly the same as me now. So he shut up. But occasionally, and I do say occasionally, I will ask for a glass of [American accent] water.

**Water?**

Water. I don't know, it's a really strange thing. Especially in restaurants....

**You say ‘restroom’? You don’t say, “Where’s the bog?”**

Yes, but I do like restroom. Because, again, as you were talking about the pants thing, restroom, I think that’s quite dignified.

**Yes, that’s a word they’ve got better than us.**

And also, I like the way the Americans say ‘garage’. Because we go ‘GAR-age’. I like gar-AGE, it suddenly makes it quite, “Ah, the gar-AGE. I’m going to the gar-AGE.”

**Yes, I like that one.**

Anyway.

**Maybe it’s a subconscious thing. I’m from Yorkshire originally, I’ve not lived there for years. But my wife’s convinced that when I go back there to visit friends and family, that I somehow become more Yorkshire. She says it’s an affectation, but it’s not. Just maybe when in Yorkshire, you do as the Yorkshiremen do.**

Yes. And I think also your ear attunes, because if I go back to Glasgow, definitely I think I will speak quicker. I don’t go particularly stronger, but a little bit. And I think if you heard me speak to my sister and my family in Scotland, it does get a little bit. It doesn’t go [strong Scottish accent], “Hello there, how’re you... it’s good to see you.”

**Like Russ Abbot used to do.**

Yes, that’s right! “Ah, see you, Jimmy!” So yes, it’s an interesting thing, but I think it’s just, you go back and you’re amongst your, as we say in Scotland, amongst your own folk. That’s it.

**But as a British journalist that’s come here, you’re incredibly well respected and recognised in both countries - and that’s unusual. Like Rhod Sharp, for example, who was with the BBC for years. He lives in Marblehead in Massachusetts and broadcasts on BBC5 Live back to Britain. But no one knows who he is in America. And people Google him and say, “Oh, wow, I didn’t realise you were such a big deal in Britain,” because you’re a big deal in both. If I can flatter you.**

Well, no. That’s very kind. I think when I was on KTLA for about six years, you got some recognition. But then it’s been quite a few years since that. So not particularly, I don’t really think so. It’s a weird thing. I never ever, if I go back to Britain and if somebody knows who I am, it doesn’t surprise me. And if somebody has no idea who I am, it doesn’t surprise me. So I’ve been like that, I quite like flying under the radar a little bit. It’s never been a thing. I never got into the business for recognition, I got into the business because I love it.

## **What do you love about it?**

Everything. I absolutely love every single bit of it. I love the madness. I love the silliness. I love the stupidity, and I love the fun of it. And that's the thing. And every day I have a laugh, every single day of my life. And even when there's been sad times, and lost my mum and dad, not at the same time, but even then, myself and my sister, we have some kind of a laugh about things. And that's been the story of my life. And it's the way my mom and dad were, that was the way that I was brought up in Glasgow, which was that whole thing of, enjoy every day as if it were your last, because one day you will be right. And also, I don't like the alternative. I've always been very much, the glass is half full. I smile a lot, I'm happy, I walk into shops and I'm happy, and I smile. Because again, I can't figure the alternative. And I'm really lucky. I think I'm really lucky, especially if I'm going back to the UK or I'm doing some gigs or whatever, that I am what I am. So when I'm on TV, that's me.

## **“TV's Ross King.”**

I'm not one of those manic comedians, and I know quite a few, that when you meet them offstage, you want them to be that same person. And they're not. So I'm really lucky like that.

**I've had a couple of quite upbeat radio people on this podcast. And then when we've finished the podcast recording, they're still polite and respectful, but they're nowhere near as upbeat. Many years ago when I first started this, that came as a shock. “Oh, you mean you're not in real life just like you are off of the telly?”**

It's so true. And especially for comedians, there is that strange thing that so many of them are quite manic depressive. Strange. When I say strange, it's strange to us, not strange to them, but strange that they are so completely different. And sometimes it's hard for people. I completely understand people going up to someone and wanting them to be that person, and if they're not, not understanding it. I do understand it, but I also don't understand it, because I'm just me, if that makes sense.

**Now, normally in this podcast we do a chronological run-through of their career, but let's start halfway along in it, in a sense. What prompted the move to LA? And you've clearly made a huge success of it. What about the challenges?**

I've been really lucky, and lucky my whole career. but there's a little bit of, I think Gary Player, the golfer, was the first person to ever use the expression, “The more I practice, the luckier I get.” And I think that's such a great truism. I came here, and being really honest, I'd been lucky, I'd gone back into the theatre and done some musicals. I'd done the Rocky Horror Show and played Frank N. Furter in the Rocky Horror Show, did a musical at Sadler's Wells. And one night I was backstage at Sadler's Wells, and I remember it really well, because even if I look up in this studio here, I remember looking up and just thinking... just like that. It was like I put my foot on the pedal and there was nothing there. I was just flat, and I don't know what it was.

**By the way, when you sighed then, you deliberately turned away from the microphone. That's the sign of a pro. When you knew that you have to turn slightly to the side, that was good.**

I don't want sound men having blood coming out their ears. That's the adage.

**So you did this sigh.**

I did this huge sigh and then thought, "I don't know what it is." And I went home, and then I realised that I was a bit burned out. Not through any abuse of anything, but just the fact that I'd worked since I was 15 professionally, and that was it. And I thought, "I need a change." And that's what I recognised myself. "I need to do something else."

**But that takes an incredible strength of character, to, A, recognise that, and then, B, frankly, then do it.**

Madness, I think it is. I think it comes under the heading of madness. So then I thought... I'd come to LA a lot, a bit like yourself, and I'd loved it. I'd had fun when I was here. I had an opportunity to come here back in about '93, '94. I'd had a couple of offers, but I had a TV show in Britain at the time called Pebble Mill, which was a great chat show at the BBC. So I was loving it and I thought, "I can't give that up to come to America and have no idea what I'm going to do." So that was it. And I thought, "You know what? I'm going to come out to LA, I'll come out for two, three months, come out for pilots."

**That's a long two or three months.**

And that's the thing. LA hooks you, I think.

**Yes, La La Land, it does.**

Sucks you in. And I've seen it with so many people, you either get it really quickly or you don't. And I completely understand both ways, both ways of thinking. You just think either, "I love this place, I'm going to make the most of it," or you go, "It's not for me." And I've seen people come out here for two, three weeks, and actually funnily enough, say, "Yes, I gave LA a chance. I was there for three weeks." And as we all know here, it can be three weeks before you get a meeting. You can ask to meet with someone, and then they say, "Yes, how about..." And it's the next month, and you go, "I was thinking maybe this week." So once you get that and get the place, and I always say this, it's full of silly overachievers. And so when I got here I think they went, "You're silly. I think you're an overachiever. You may stay."

**It's like the oddest, most unique place in the world. Every month. I come here for six or seven days across two visits. I've got quite a few clients here, and I just absolutely love it. But then when I'm in New York, I love that, and then when I'm back in London I love that... I think I'm just fickle, that maybe I'll just be constantly peripatetic. Homeless.**

No, I think you're really lucky. And I think that's the great thing. If you recognise the strength and all the great values of other places and you're lucky enough to be able to travel to them all, because they all have great things. I'm from Glasgow. Glasgow will always have brilliant things. London I lived in for a long time. Manchester, I lived. New York I lived in for about a year as well. So all these places all offer you something. And I think it's a bit like the world itself. And I always say this – and whatever you believe in, God or whatever god, or whatever – it does not give with both hands. That's the simple thing. And once you get that, life's pretty straightforward, I think. No one says, "We're going to give you, there's fame, fortune, I have to take a bit of your privacy." There's no giving with both hands. "There, you have it all." And if you look at anyone in this world and people that you aspire to be or people you look up to, or just people that you see in the TV or in movies, no one has it all. Sometimes it looks like they have it all, but I've never met anyone that has it all. And some of the people that I know that are the richest people that I know are the most unhappy. So I think that's the way to live by. But also I think in terms of where you want to live, I think LA offers so much, but obviously it doesn't offer absolutely everything.

### **It's that old Scottish phrase, isn't it? "What's for you won't go by you"?**

Oh, brilliant expression. Gran used to say that all the time. And I think, again, if you live by that, it's perfect. And trying to explain that to people sometimes, especially to younger people, and I do a lot of talks at universities, colleges, that kind of thing. And that's one of the big things that I always say. I say, "What's for you won't go by you. Just use that as your byword." I say, "Be tenacious," because I think in this town especially, tenacity is such a big, big thing.

### **"Shy bairns get nowt," my Nana used to say.**

That's another thing as well. And it's funny, going with that, it's a little bit like, "The squeaky wheel gets the oil." And sometimes I will say certain things. I don't want to be a squeaky wheel. I've never wanted to be the squeaky wheel. I may squeak a little bit if I'm not getting what I think is right, but I never want to be the squeaky wheel. But again, it's a truism, squeaky wheel does get the oil. So I think that's the simple thing, and it's all about the balance. That's what I've always believed, that life, your career, it's all about a balance. No one ever gets it right. It's not like riding a bike and you go, "Yes, I'm off. Look at this." And you can take your hands off the handlebars and go, "Yes, I'm absolutely perfect." Balance in life is always, you're always not quite getting it right. And sometimes you've gone one way, sometimes you've gone the other. The idea is, when you've gone down to the left, you want to pull it back up to the right a little bit. So I think it's really simple, straightforward. But so much of this I got from my mum and my dad. And again, I'm so unbelievably lucky to have had the parents that I had, the guidance that I had, the love that I had. And I know that not everyone gets that, has had that opportunity. So that's definitely made me the person that I am. And certainly mum and dad. Dad was my hero, a gentleman, erudite. Mum was wonderful. They were both very talented in their own different ways. And I learned so much from them. Yes, lucky.

**They've clearly given you a real grounding, which, does that help you, that grounding that you have in reality, to succeed at a town like this, that is a bit La La Land?**

Definitely. I always think of mum, and I always quote two great times in my career. One was when I was a kid in local radio, and it was not long after Live Aid. And then we had Sport Aid, I don't know if you remember, we had Sport Aid, the big, big thing. And I was a radio DJ at the time at Radio Clyde in Glasgow. And in Scotland it was a big station, and you became a huge fish in a little pond, and it was wonderful. And I had a great time there. And actually – this is the funny part that'll make you laugh – that I actually had two bodyguards. I had two minders.

**And I can see you've brought them with you today.**

That's right, exactly. They're inside the door. And so it was really great fun. And I was hosting this event, and there's 10,000 people at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre. And I'm thinking, "Wow," looking out at 10,000 people, and I'm DJing and all the rest of it, and introducing all these big pop acts and it's Sport Aid, and all the rest of it. And I thought, mum and dad, I knew that they were going to be there. I thought, "They must be quite proud of me today." And then amazingly enough, and this is so true, I just about to introduce another big star. And I looked down, and I could see my mum and dad near the front. And so anyway, did the introduction, got off. And Campbell, who was one of my minders at the time, said, "Oh, you can't go down there." I said, "No, I've got to go down. It's my mum and dad." And he said, "Well, there's all these crash barriers, you won't get that close." I said, "Well, I just need to get down a bit." And I got down to probably about 50 feet from them, and I saw them, and I was giving them both the big thumbs up. And my mum looked across at me and she went, "Speak slower."

**Real time feedback.**

Real time feedback.

**From a benevolent critic.**

Yes. And then my other one, which again, just showed mum, not only the way that she kept you grounded, but also her humour too. And I was going to be on Celebrity Squares. So in America it's Hollywood Squares, but in Britain the show is Celebrity Squares.

**We American standard urinals here, but it's ideal standard back in the UK. Ideal standard.**

Ideal, ideal.

**I realise no one would buy American standard, because it breaks.**

Yes, well, there's another gag in that as well, isn't there? But I won't get to that. And so it's Celebrity Square, so I can't believe I'm going to be on this show. So I phoned

my mum, and she started crying because she was watching Coronation Street and she hates to miss it.

**Oh, she was crying because you interrupted her.**

Yes, yes. And I said, "Mum, I'm going to be on Celebrity Squares." And she went, "That is unbelievable." She said, "I hope you win the car." I said, "Mum, I'm not a contestant. I'm going to be one of the celebrities." And that showed her humour as well. But I think all those things, there was always that, in the nice way, that it was like a little clip round the ear, that sort of stuff. There was never any chance of ever getting above your station. And I think in Glasgow especially, coming from west of Scotland it's always like you get put down there quite a lot. And it's always funny, because what I love about Scotland is that all the juxtapositions, we were the European murder capital but also voted the world's friendliest city. So someone will stab you but then direct you to the hospital. It's that weird thing, but there's that great thing in Glasgow that, "A kent yer faither" is a Scottish expression, which, "I knew his father." It's like, "Oh, I knew his dad," that stuff. And that always keeps you completely grounded.

**When people are watching you from the UK and they see your life out here reporting, I imagine they would think it's wall-to-wall glitzy premieres and dinner parties and so on. What is a typical week for you? Because the other thing that's very interesting about you is that you've got incredible achievements in journalism that you're doing all the time, but you've also got, and I hate the phrase 'portfolio career', but you're doing so many other things as well in the entertainment space, acting, presenting, and all manner of...**

Writing, yes.

**How do you have time for it all?**

I don't. That is actually the answer. I really don't. And a typical day out here can be absolutely anything. So there is no typical day. In terms of the TV, five nights a week, and starting with a Sunday, because obviously it's Monday in the UK. So you can be on any night live from six in the morning in the UK until about 9:30.

**So that's 10pm here.**

Yes, 10pm to 1:30.

**So your breakfast television stint starts at 10pm?**

Yes, 10pm. But then of course that doesn't necessarily mean... sometimes you might have to be in the studio by nine, but then some of the terrible... the way that my career is funny, it moves along, but obviously you do all the entertainment stuff, but also, sadly, you have to cover the shootings and the terrorist attacks. So that's all part of my job as well. And then you may get the call that something's happened, like El Paso in Texas, that horrendous shooting incident. You just, "Go now. Get to the airport." It could be now, even as we are chatting, the phone could just buzz and say,

“This has happened, get to the airport, get in the car, drive, whatever.” So you really are on call 24/7. So you have to work everything else around that.

**I don't mean this question in a shallow way, but which aspects of journalism do you enjoy the most? Because obviously you don't enjoy the fact there's been a shooting, but is it an enjoyable part of journalism to report on something that's so hard-hitting and being at the centre of it? Or do you like the balance between light and shade?**

Yes, I do like the balance. And I feel very fortunate to be able to do that. And I think how lucky I was to go into hospital, really, when I was a kid, at 15, to go into local radio when I was 15, 16, and to have worked in the newsrooms there. So to have that journalistic background as well has served me so well. And I think, again, I'm probably one of the last breed of people that were brought up doing everything.

**Chief cook and bottle washer.**

Yes, and that's not to say how clever I am. It's just to say that I was brought up that way, which was, you were a kid, that you did some acting, you were put on a stage, you could sing. My mum and dad were both very musical, so you continued that. Then you actually were a writer before you knew you were a writer, because even when you were a kid doing pantomimes you would rewrite stuff. Or when I was doing the radio, then you'd write some sketches. And you never really thought, “I'm actually writing.” You were just thinking, “I've just come up with this idea and here's the joke and all the rest of it.” And so all those things, and then to go into radio, then to get into TV when I was 17, 18 as well. To get to do all that, and I know it's funny, I remember having a meeting with one of the bosses at one of the stations back in Britain, and he was saying, he said, “It's quite funny. We really don't have many people that can one minute be reporting on a horrendous incident and then the next minute be on stage singing with Donny Osmond in Las Vegas.”

**We've all done that.**

So it's that weird thing that people are not brought up that way now. And everything is very much, “What's in your wheelhouse?” Is that great American expression and people are very niche, so I think I probably will be the last of those people that came through that was taught to do everything, wanted to do everything. When I was a kid in local radio, I remember...

**Proudly a generalist in the sense that you're a journalist first and foremost, and you'll cover what's interesting?**

That was it, yes. I remember one of the DJs at the time, a guy called Jack McLaughlin, and he offered me the arts programme. Of course, I'm 17, 18 going, I'm a cool, trendy DJ. I don't want to do the arts. He said, “Do it, because, again, you will become a broadcaster, example as the name suggests.” So I was like, okay I'm up for that. That was it, it was great advice, and I've continued that my whole life. If someone says, here's something else, I never, ever thought I'd get a chance to write a couple of books, which I did with a lovely lady, Sherry Lowe. Again, that was

different. Then, you think, “Oh, I actually have been writing.” Then I’ve done TV scripts, I’ve done some movie scripts. So it’s wonderful, and I never, ever lose sight of the fact... again, you’ll hear me use the word lucky a lot, because I really, truly believe it. To get an opportunity to do what I’ve done, and I don’t even think that exists, or indeed it will exist, in the future, that people will be allowed to do all the many and varied things.

**Yes, because someone else might be pigeonholed as an entertainment journalist, and then...**

Absolutely.

**They would be sent to El Paso, to cover a shooting.**

Exactly, yes.

**Like most people, a lot of people in the UK, know you currently from Lorraine, and GMB, and all the Hollywood stuff that you do. Do you get star-struck now? Do you see it as a business? How do you avoid becoming cynical now, as it were?**

Well, I don’t think I would ever be... I think I’m realistic, and I will call it on TV as I see it, if I think it is being really... not being cynical, but just being real. I am still absolutely in love with the business. I still can’t believe that I’m driving onto one of the film lots here, whether it be Fox, or Warner Brothers, or any place. I just love that thing, going up to the gate. You’re lucky that you have, as they say here, a drive on rather than you have to park and walk to the gate, and get through, all that stuff, you actually drive on the lot. I drove along, and I look at all the places and think, “Oh my goodness me, that was filmed there, or that was shot there,” or I recognise things. I’m lucky where I live, right up in the Hollywood Hills, I see the Hollywood sign every day, from my windows. I do smile, I genuinely smile every day, looking at that sign thinking, how the heck did this daft boy from Glasgow end up here? Yes, I’m never... I don’t know, I think I have a natural enthusiasm for life, and a natural enthusiasm for what I do. Again, I just look every day and think, wow, here we are. We’re still here, still doing it, still getting away with it, and that’s it. Again, it’s simple, again going back to when I was a kid in the business, and I got great advice from legendary people in Britain, like Bob Monkhouse would sit with me, Des O’Connor.

**Legends.**

Paul Daniels was the one who said to me, “Oh ho, KISSTIT!” I was like, “What?” He said, “Always remember, KISSTIT. Keep it simple, stupid – think it through.”

**Ah.**

That’s again, all these little bits of advice that I’ve always taken and run with them. I thank these people.

**Which bits do you enjoy the most? Or, is it a bit that you need all of it? Like, for example, you're on air a lot, do you like the thrill of being on air? But then if you didn't write for a couple of weeks, you'd get an itch that you'd have to write. Or, do you write for two or three weeks and then think, "I need to get back on the telly?" Because, I did Jeremy Vine a couple of years ago, and he said that a lot of presenters have what he calls "the show-off gene", that they want the attention, and there's no shame in that. He said that often when people get into broadcast media, they quickly decide whether they're air side or not. Whether they want that limelight.**

Yes. No, I must admit, I've never chased that side of it, it's been a by-product. I mean, I love performing, and I've done quite a lot of plays and musicals. But, it all comes back... Like, last week we were up in Sacramento, and I got to perform on stage with Buddy Holly, and Roy Orbison. Well obviously, not them, but their holograms.

### **That's incredible.**

Which feels like you've been on stage. So to sing 'Oh Boy' with Buddy Holly, and to play 'Pretty Woman' with Roy Orbison is just ridiculous. Then again, I think of things, whether it be singing with Donny Osmond, or going back to the UK performing, or dancing with Des O'Connor, or singing with the Nolans, and all the weird and wonderful things I've had to do. Again, I've always realised the grass always seems greener on the other side. But, when you realise that it's not, then just enjoy what you do. If I go and see a musical now – and I think anyone who's ever been in a musical or wants to be in a musical will know this feeling – you go and see the show, and then you identify the role that is the one that you think you could do. Then, when the music starts you start going, "Oh, that's in my key. Oh, oh, that's tricky." Then, you start watching and you think, "Oh could I do that little bit of movement? Yes, I could probably... oh, that would be tough..." You analyse it all, and then sometimes you think, "I'd love to do that." In the main, what happens a lot of time is basically, in my case, you go and see something, say like Jersey Boys, and you think, "I'd love to do that." Then, you see your role, not the Frankie Valli role, and you think, yes Tommy DeVito, that would be great. Then, you realise that you're too old to play it, that's the other sad thing. It's like, when you realise you're too old to play Danny in Grease, and they want you to play Teen Angel, it's a bit of a...

### **Well, Stockard Channing was quite old, wasn't she?**

Well, she was only 30, 31.

### **Well, she was playing an 18-year old.**

Yes, well she was still only 30. So you know, those things. But then, the other side of it is, a week later you're still thinking, "I wonder if I should think about going back to do that musical?" Then you realise in the week... say, for example, like the past couple of weeks I've been in Quebec, interviewing Celine Dion. Then you're back, then you're up in Sacramento, and you're singing on stage with Buddy Holly. In that space of time, they've done eight shows. Every morning, they've got up and gone, "oh it's there". The first thing you do whenever you're in the theatre. You're waking up

in the morning, and the first thing you think, you check your voice. Yes, it's there. So you think, much as it's wonderful to do it, they're going through that. Then you think, well what I've done has been just brilliant. So you realise at some point, and I like to think and hope that I will go back and do some more theatre again, but I'll enjoy that at the time. I will then think, "Oh, those times when I wasn't doing this, and I wasn't having to check my voice every day." Again, it's the balance, and just realising what it's all about. I really don't think life is that complicated, made complicated by people.

**Do you think one day someone will come round and offer you like, a huge recording contract, and you might need to pause other aspects of your career? Or, is it that you might decide to focus on journalism, and present a big show here? You've got fingers in many pies, and one of them could present a huge opportunity to you. Or, would you then say, actually I quite like the fact that I'm doing well in all of these various tracks, even though you're spreading yourself slightly thin?**

I don't know. Again, if it happens, it happens. I mean, the way that I look at a lot of things now is that it's gravy. If someone had come to me as that 14 or 15-year-old kid at school, who was going to be a footballer, a soccer player.

**I saw "a failed footballer" in your Twitter bio this morning, I'm going to need to ask you about that.**

If someone came to me and said, all these years later, "This is where you'll be, this is what you're doing. Would that make you happy?" I'd go, "Heck, it would make me happy!" That's why I look at all those things and think, yes it's gravy. I think I'm so ridiculously lucky to have got to a point in my career where I can have a conversation with you, Paul, and say, yes it's gravy, and that's it. If someone turned around tomorrow and said, thanks for playing, game over. Much as you would hate it, I would hate it. You would think, really? But, you'd have to turn around and go, what a good innings, as a Yorkshireman would say.

**Well, indeed. Innings is the wrong reference, really, because I'm now going to ask you about being a failed footballer. In what sense are you a failed footballer? I read that on your Twitter bio this morning, when I was waiting for you at the studio. I thought, I don't remember any of that?**

Yes. As a kid, I was going to go to Partick Thistle, which was my local team. In Scotland, we have... well, in Glasgow, you've got the big teams, you've got Ranger, Celtic, and then you've got Partick Thistle in the middle. Or, to give them the foo title, "Partick Thistle, nil. It was always, "Rangers, three, Partick Thistle, nil. Celtic, four, Partick Thistle, nil." So, I was going to go and play for them, and I went as a kid, and had some trials, and was going to sign as a schoolboy. I always remember, Bertie Auld, who was a Lisbon line, won the European Cup with Glasgow Celtic back in '67, the legendary player, became a manager. I remember being ushered into his office, by Jackie Husband, who was one of the assistants at the time. He said, "Oh, boss, boss, this is one of the new boys." He looked at me and he said, "Son, you'll wear out more meadows than football boots." I think I realised... I was about to, funnily enough, go and have a trial at Manchester City, and I realised that I was going to be

a very, very average player. I'm not even going to say that I definitely would have, people have been very nice. I was lucky... again, there we are, there's the word lucky... that what happened was, that because I played to a reasonable standard, I then got invited to play in all these games with all these former professionals. So, I played for Scotland, against England, at Wembley Stadium, and scored, amazingly enough.

### **Congratulations.**

I was the only non-ex-professional playing. I think of getting an opportunity to do that, but also realising I would never, ever have achieved that, ever, if I'd played. It's funny, as the years go by, people will do, and I go back to Glasgow. Then somebody will say, "Ah, you should have been, and you could have been." You go, "No." Even my dad, dear old dad, would see me play sometimes, I played a few times at Wembley, and he would sometimes go, "Oh son, I think maybe you should have stuck in at the football." I said, "Dad, no. I'm an actor, and I now know how to look like a footballer." That's the difference, and also I'm playing with people who are internationals, who are knocking the ball exactly, just the right pace, just in front of me to run onto it and things. Again, ridiculously lucky.

### **I used to play a lot of five-a-side, back in York.**

Oh, yes?

### **Back in the days.**

Yes.

### **They're a burgeoning five-a-side, you'd call it soccer here, wouldn't you?**

Yes.

### **In LA, or is everyone...**

Oh, no, no.

### **Do you still play now, I suppose?**

Yes, yes. I still play, I still play. Not as often as I used to, because it's just been so crazy.

### **You still scoring goals?**

No. Sweeper, a libero. I'd like to just prance around at the back, and look like I know what I'm doing. Yes, we've had great fun. We've had lots of great... Robbie Williams, Robbie had a great football pitch at one of his homes. One of his homes, nice Rob. We used to go up there and play, a couple of times a week. BAFTA LA, we started a team here, which is really funny because it all came out of the fact that we would

occasionally play cricket. I love playing cricket, which seems strange for a Scotsman. I would be the mad wicket keeper.

**Well, if you've got six or seven hours to spare.**

Exactly.

**"Hey everyone, let's have a game of cricket."**

The funniest thing was, it didn't seem to encourage a team effort, I don't know why. Even, we would play, and then a couple of weeks later I'd bump into somebody that we'd played, and there was no comradery. Whereas, for some reason, football's really got that. So, myself, and a dear friend of mine, Julian Stone, a great actor, we said one time, why don't we try and start some football? I thought, even if we've just gone up to the local park, and put our jackets down as kids, and that's what we did. Then, the great thing was, we did that a few times. Then, the skills came back for some people, didn't for others. Then we thought, well, we'll put a BAFTA LA team together, which we did. We got strips, and we started playing. But the great thing about football is that if you've go to a dinner party... this is one thing I don't like about LA. If you go to a dinner party, you walk in and someone will say, "Oh, hi everybody, this is Ross," and then suddenly they go through your resume. Also, sometimes, if you ask somebody how are you doing, you just want to go, yes I'm great, thanks. People here will go, "Yes, I'm doing well," and they'll go straight into, "I'm doing this..." You go, "No, I just asked if you were okay, I don't need to know everything."

**And your network, as well. You're judged very much here on who you know.**

Exactly. The football, it was just a guess. This was my favourite one was, that... I was playing sweeper, and this is my centre half. They go, this is Paigey. I go, "Oh, hi Paigey, Rossy." Great, great, great. Then, at halftime someone said, "Oh, Martin," and I went, "Martin. Paigey? Oh, Paige." I went, "Excuse me, Paigey?" And he went "Yes?" I went, "Are you a songwriter?" He went, "Yes." I said, "Did you write We Built This City?"

**Yes.**

He went, "Yes."

**"On rock and roll."**

"Did you write These Dreams? Did you write Faithful? Did you write King of Wishful Thinking for Go West?" He went... I said, "You've written some of my favourite songs." He said, "Well, how did you know?" I said, "Because I was a DJ, and back in the day, you used to have to fill in the PSB, the performance size broadcast, and I wrote down all the songwriters." So, I knew songwriters. But, I thought, how brilliant. It wasn't like, here's your centre half, Martin Paige, phenomenal songwriter, but it was just Paigey. He'd been at Southampton, so we had a lot of things to talk about, how we'd both not quite made the grade as a footballer. I loved that, so that's what I love about football here. That you have no idea, the guy from Weezer, all right!

Robbie would play sometimes, and some Americans wouldn't know who he was because he just goes, he's Rob. Love it.

**I was in a 7-Eleven recently, and I was listening to...**

You show off!

**Yes.**

In a 7-Eleven?

**I was queuing.**

You live the life.

**I was queuing to buy some groceries, and I'm listening to...**

In a line?

**Yes, yes, in a line. Yes, I was in the line, and I'm listening to Appetite for Destruction by Guns and Roses, and I'm getting along to it. And the guy taps me on the shoulder behind me, and he says, "It's a good album, isn't it?" I said, "Yes, do you like it?" He said, "Yes, I'm Duff McKagan, I'm the bass player from Guns and Roses." I'm like, okay.**

That is the brilliant thing. I mean, LA is that place where these things happen. I was at a party once, and I had a guy either side of me. My friend was on the right hand side. There was a guitar, and I picked it up, and I'm useless. I'm a three chord wonder, useless, not even playing the three chords well. The guy to my left, he was younger, he went, "Hey man, can I have the guitar? I'm in a band, I'll play." I was like, "Okay." And he played, and he was worse than me. So I said, "Can I have the guitar back?" He said, "Sure." I turned to my friend, I said, "Can you play something?" He went, "Sure. What do you want me to play?" I said, "Play one of the songs you wrote for Elvis."

**Wow. Because I've written no songs for Elvis.**

Funny, that? It was Mac Davis who wrote In the Ghetto, he wrote A Little Less Conversation, a whole bunch of songs. The funny thing was, he started playing it and he got to the chorus and went, "In the ghetto," and he said, "I hated the way that Elvis sang in the ghetto." He said, "I was there the night that Elvis recorded it," he said. "I couldn't believe it, I went in and said Elvis, you're in the ghetto. Nobody lives in the ghetto." He goes, "In the ghett-ow."

**Yes.**

But he said, that was it. He said, "Every time I hear it on the radio, I kind of go 'ah!'" Then, jump to I'm interviewing Dolly Parton, and a friend of mine had said, "Oh, would you say to Dolly...?"

### **Please tell me she's amazing in real life?**

Brilliant. Dolly Parton is one of those people, she is exactly as you want her to be, and I don't think you can say anything better in her favour than that.

### **She's genuinely, probably, one of my most favourite people in the world. I've always adored her.**

Love her, absolutely love her. I said, "A friend wondered if you want to write?" She said, "I don't really write with anyone else." She said, "But I do write... do you know Mac Davis?" So I went, "Do I know Mac Davis," I said. I told her the story. As I finished it, she looked at me and she said, "Oh my goodness me," she said. "I recorded In The Ghetto, but I sang in the ghett-ow, because that's how Elvis sang it." She said, "I'm going to have to phone Mac Davis and say I apologise." I thought, "How the heck did this stupid, daft boy from Glasgow get in a story about Elvis, Dolly Parton, and Mac Davis?" It's just that wonderful thing, in LA you sometimes find yourself in a moment you think, "Wow it really is, it's Hollywood, and Hollyweird."

### **Plus, I would want some kind of consulting, producer credit for that, because you've got to shoehorn yourself in somehow.**

That's right. I wonder if she ever does it in concert now, and she goes, "In the ghetto. Thank you, Ross." Thanks Ross, yes.

### **Do you get starstruck?**

I never get particularly starstruck. I do have moments when you think, "Oh my goodness me, I'm here."

### **A bit like Dolly Parton?**

With Dolly Parton, and I'm in the middle of their story. I have funny moments when there's people that you've had, and still have a crush on, and... I had one at the weekend, Sarah Rafferty, who is Donna in Suits. If you've never seen Suits, you won't have an idea. If you've watched Suits, you will know who Donna is. Everyone knows Donna. She's the most lovely, 'ravishing' is a good word to describe her; ravishing, beautiful, redhead. Not ravishing, just a redhead. She has beautiful red hair, married with two lovely daughters, and she's just lovely. It's funny, Donna is like your ideal woman, and Sarah is the exact same. So, when I'm interviewing her, it's funny, my cameraman goes, "Oh, you got all bit hot, there. A little bit sweaty." That is true. It's funny, when you're interviewing someone like that. I remember Halle Berry, or Julia Roberts. Julia's really challenging, I love interviewing Julia Roberts because she really challenges you.

### **In what sense?**

I'm trying to think of the last time when I was speaking to her. Oh, I remember it, I was saying that, in this movie that we're talking about at the time, and she didn't look like the Julia that we know and adore, but Julia's a great actress. There was no makeup, the hair was a bit dowdy, the whole stuff. I said to her, "It must be great when you're doing a movie like this, that we get to see very much your acting chops. The fact that you look dowdy, and the no makeup, and all the rest?" She went, "Ross," she went – it was quite funny, but I remember her saying, she said, "my friend", but she's not my friend – she said, "You wouldn't say that to George Clooney." I went, "No, no, I would because," I said, "There's a great example." George Clooney, massive movie star, we see him in things and you go, "Great," because he looks like George Clooney, he acts like George Clooney, and it's being George, movie star. Other movies, he's great, he's put on weight, he's got a beard, he looks different. I said, "That's all it is." I said, "That's it, and you know exactly what I mean." She went, "Okay, you're my friend again." So, I love the fact, though, that she just doesn't take things, and she doesn't suffer fools gladly, and I love that.

**It's hard work acting, though, isn't it? I mean, I went to see 12 Angry Men a couple of years ago, and Jeff Fahey was playing the guy who breaks down...**

Yes.

**I'll never forget, he cried at the end of it. Then, obviously the curtains closed, and then everyone takes a bow.**

Yes.

**I noticed that when he came out, all the actors, he was still crying, there was still tears coming from his eyes. He obviously had gone to a place to get upset, and it was still upsetting him, and that struck me just how hard a job it is, to create that emotion and make it real. It was real.**

Yes. For some people, they have to go very deep, dark places, and other people can switch on and switch off. That's what I think is wonderful about acting, is that there's no real right or wrong method. Some people are very method, some people are not. Again, it just depends on who you are, and what your technique is. But, it is fascinating, sometimes. When I came here in 2000, I went back to acting class for three years, and studied. Some people that I worked with were just... I was completely in awe of them, and their techniques, and what it took them to get there, and other people who could just cry. There's some people who can just cry like that. I mean, I can cry like that, because all I have to do is think about my mum and dad, and I'm gone. Even if I talk about them, I get really emotional. It's interesting what you do, just the little techniques. Whether it's sense memory, if you touch a glass, and you rub the glass, and that reminds of something. It's great.

**But, it must be difficult to switch it off, though? If you think about your mum and dad, and you get upset, and you've drawn from that well of memories, then**

**it must take a lot of discipline to then become the old, the normal Ross? The non-upset Ross, I should say.**

I think the only show that I ever did where I got a little bit lost in the character was The Rocky Horror Show, because playing Frank N. Furter is such a bizarre character. But, he's such a sexual being, and it was weird that I did carry that on into life. People would come and see me after the show, and I would just be looking at them like, "Hello."

**Yes.**

It was very like that, and they'd go, "Stop looking at me like that." Because my whole thing on stage was this ridiculous, over the top character, but who had this incredible heart, there was so many layers to him. But, it was the funniest thing that I didn't quite shake that off for a little bit. But I've seen people go mad. They play Danny Zuko in Grease and then think everyone's screaming for them. And you want to go...

**They're screaming for Danny.**

They're screaming for Danny.

**Who wouldn't?**

Exactly. Yes, exactly.

**So another question I had is, a lot of people do this where they want to pursue a career in acting or producing or singing and they'll wait tables and wait to be discovered. We had a Hollywood deal maker, a lawyer guy, a guy called Ken Hertz and he was actually quite an interesting podcast because he was talking about you see a Beyoncé, you see all of these big names and you don't realise that there's another 50 people that are just as talented as them, but their face didn't quite fit. The line between 30 years of waiting tables or winning the EGOT is actually quite thin.**

Oh, incredibly thin. Again, even with what I do, there's one job and I've got it. Are there gazillions of other people that can do it? Yes. Absolutely. And again, it's just that fine line. You happen to be the person at that moment. You happen to be the right look for it. The right person. And when you realise that, I think that's when you should embrace it and realise how lucky that you are. Because Ken Hertz is a legendary lawyer, but there's a lot of lawyers and if you're a lawyer you think, "Well, I need to join a law firm because there's lots of lawyers." Whereas if you want to say, "I'm going to be the lead in that movie," well, there's one lead normally. So if you get it, wow. But there's so many other people that could get it. So you've got to realise how lucky that you are.

**But not that you'd ever be complacent, but there must be an incumbency advantage that the audience of Lorraine and Good Morning Britain want you on the red carpet. They want the stars to be interviewed for their show, but I think**

**there's also that familiarity. My mum likes the fact... she was incredibly impressed that we're doing this podcast.**

Thank you, mum.

**But she wants you and your style. So I think unless you've completely dropped a clanger, ITV would be ridiculous to drop you and get someone else to save 10 grand or whatever. It can't all be about money and Piers Morgan teasing you when a Hollywood celebrity walks past you.**

And they never do. That's what he tried to do, and they didn't. It's again, can people do all the things I can do? You could probably argue, well no, just because they haven't had the breadth of experience, but you can still easily be replaced. And I'm always very aware of that. So I will never ever, ever be complacent in any way, shape or form, because that's how easy it is to be changed. And it's lovely and thank you to your mum as well for saying those nice things. But you do realise in life that it changes. What is interesting though, we were having a conversation the other day, and again, when you get to a point in your career and you're getting a little bit older, the interesting thing was someone said to me that because with millennials, hate to use that expression but let's use it, people are not watching, of that age, TV. They're watching YouTube, picking things up in all different ways. So the interesting thing is that the TV audience, which is now so much older, do want to see people that they relate to or maybe people they grew up with. And I was lucky that I did kid's TV when I was very young. Kids TV in Scotland, then kids TV in the UK. So there's certain people that, if I go to events or I'm doing a gig somewhere, people will say, "Oh, I grew up watching you on 'The 8:15 from Manchester' or whatever, whatever. And then 'Pebble Mill' and now. So they've gone on a journey with me. So that's nice. But it's interesting someone said to me, but because of that audience, there's a possibility that it will continue and continue because people want to see familiar faces, people that hopefully they can trust. I'd like to think that when it comes to the whole Hollywood scene, I will be honest. And I like to sometimes peel the curtain back just a little bit and just explain to people, "This is what it's all about. Here's the real truth." You're watching this, but two c-listers makes an A-lister and all the little things that you can peel the curtain back and just say, "And also the reason that they're doing this is that that's a little bit fake because they've got this movie coming up and this is what they're doing." I never want to pull it completely back and go, "Ta-da!" because you don't want to ruin everything for people at home. But equally, it's quite nice to go. Yes, but the real reason is. And that's just my experience.

**If you think of honours though, Her Majesty the Queen isn't normally in the habit of routinely dishing out these gongs to someone who lives thousands of miles away. Normally it's the civil servants and the lollipop ladies and all the successful people in the UK. It must have meant quite a lot to be British, but be so far away and yet still be recognised for your contribution. Well, how emotional was that to get the MBE?**

Incredibly emotional.

**You memorably broke down, well broke down is too strong a phrase, but there was an emotional discussion with Lorraine, wasn't there, when you got it?**

Oh yes, very much so. And also that's because of mum and dad because I was lucky to get it for broadcasting, for the arts and for charity, but I really accepted it for mum and dad because they deserved it. The amount of work that they did and the charity work that they got involved in, but also...

**You didn't accept it down the line on split screen thing that we're used to seeing on Good Morning Britain.**

No. That would be great. No. No.

**Please tell me you had a word with the Queen.**

I was there with the Queen. And of course there's that funny thing because you've only ever seen her on a stamp. So you don't know whether to shake her hand or lick the side of her face. So that happened.

**I imagine that was quite a moment.**

Oh it was just again, because you're thinking about mum and dad and also, when I got a little bit older, I remember saying to my dad and you would see the birthday honours list or the new year's honours list and you would look down at it. And I used to always say, "Dad, you should get something for mum." And dad said, without a word of a lie, "People like us just don't get these things." And I was like, "okay." So I took it on board, people like us... So when it happened, and dad had passed by then, but it was just I had a little look up and thought, "Yep, pops, for you and mom. This is for you, really." And so that day when I went to meet the Queen and we did it at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh, which the Queen's official residency or official castle there, official palace there. It was just that amazing moment. And my sister was there and my niece and nephew and my brother-in-law. So to share it with the family there, in Scotland, was really special.

**Are you allowed to say what she said?**

Yes. Oh yes.

**What did she say then? I'm fascinated.**

When I went forward, she said right away she went, "Oh, you've come a long way." And I went, "Oh, thank you, Your Majesty."

**Was she being figurative or literal there?**

Exactly. That's what I said.

**That's clever.**

And that's what I said. I actually said, "You mean today or in my career?" And then she was laughing and she said, "You travel back and forth a lot." And I said, "I do." I said, "But obviously I came here today for this." And she went, "Oh, you came specially for this?"

**Well, you are the Queen, love.**

"Well Ma'am," I said, "it might just be another day for you, but for me this is one of the biggest highlights of my life." And then the interesting thing is, they always say... so when you get the gong, you've already got a little clip here that she just slips it on. So there's no full pinning on.

**Yes. She wouldn't be fiddling with a safety pin, would she?**

Exactly.

**She's the Queen.**

And then they say... so once she's done that, then when she chats to you, if she does chat to you, because she might not, then as she raises her hand and shakes your hand, that's it over. That's it. And if people forget, it's quite funny that they say "She will gently push you back." But I thought the minute I saw a hand coming up, I'm going to say what I want to say. And so we chat, chat, chat, chat, chat, and then as the hand came up I said, "Ma'am, can I just say one thing? Which is I want to say thank you to you for being the most incredible monarch. You're all I've known my whole life and you have been unbelievable and I just want to say thank you from myself and from my family." And as I said it, the weirdest thing was that my family were so close that they could hear because it was very quiet at that point. They could hear and we've got this wonderful photograph of the Queen smiling and because sometimes you don't see her smile too often and she's got the most beautiful smile.

**Well, you get smile fatigue. Have you ever been at a wedding and you smile for three hours and your face hurts.**

Yes. That's it. Yes. There we are, perfect description. So I've got that lovely picture and I've got that on the wall, of the Queen smiling. People think she's smiling at me, but it's not. It's what I said.

**I'm a raving Republican. I want an elected head of state. But my argument is unfortunately undermined by the fact that the Queen does a good job.**

That's it.

**I don't want Charles to inherit the job of head of state, but we are lucky to have the Queen that we have and I accept that even as a republican, she does an amazing job.**

The Queen has been phenomenal. You think all that she's gone through, all that she's dealt with and when she became Queen at such a young age before she probably really was completely prepared for it. It was a shock. It was a surprise and then she had to deal with it and she has done all these years and that's what she's done. She's been the Queen. And again, I think exactly, whether you're a royalist or you're not, I think the admiration for the Queen and I think also the love for the Queen, is amazing in Britain. And I think because...

**They love her here as well.**

Yes.

**They're crazy for the Americans.**

Our generation... she's the longest serving monarch ever, I think, actually ever now, obviously in the world, but I think ever. So to appreciate all that she's done and to do it while she's still alive is a big thing.

**Now. This is a media podcast and because you're such an interesting guy, we've been hijacked by your interestingness, so can I ask a couple of token industry questions to justify our existence?**

Absolutely.

**How has Hollywood changed over the two decades you've been here, in terms of we've got the rise of Netflix but also the Me Too movement? You must have seen some incredible changes.**

Oh, huge. Social media, I think is one of the biggest ones. And also knowing that people now going for an audition for a movie, will be asked the question...

**What's your social reach?**

Yes. And that's such a big thing. And I know some pretty big names who don't buy into it. I will be the first to say if I could not tweet, Insta anything, I would love it.

**Too many tweets make a twat, as David Cameron used to say. Might have to sling his hook within a few months anyway.**

But yes, I would gladly not do anything. But I do it obviously because of my job and also it's nice interacting with people. I like that side of it. That's been an absolute huge change and a huge game changer as well. And also, again, when you're looking at what people view things on now, that's such a difference. Funny, Gary Barlow, one of my best friends from the band Take That and we were talking about music now and he said, "I don't really know what number one is or what does the number one look like now? Is it downloads? Is it streaming?" When you know someone like that who's been in the business his whole life and had the huge success, you understand how hard it is to understand certain aspects of the media.

So a lot of changes like that. Obviously some changes, #MeToo, all changes for the better. All the things that, again, I used to say to people, "The casting coach is alive, not well." It's alive and it always has been.

### **Still alive.**

It's still alive. Not as much I think. I think, the great thing is that for want of a better description, the #MeToo movement has made inroads in that. But there's an underbelly in Hollywood that is still not nice and people don't get to see it that often, which is probably a good thing. But yes, there definitely is that, and what people can get away with in this town because you're famous, rich and famous. That will always happen, too. I don't know how that will ever completely change. But again, with all these things, you just got to chip away at things.

**But you're friends with Gary Barlow, he was obviously best man at your wedding. I've been on the next table to him in various restaurants and whenever I've chatted to him very briefly, he's always been polite and respectful. He could have become a giant asshole, as they would say here, because the fame gets to you. How do you stay grounded and be respectful and have an element of normalness about you?**

Yes. I can never speak for myself because I don't have anything like that level of fame, achievement or whatever. I think with people like Gary, they're just inherently... he's a nice bloke and Gary's dad, sadly no longer with us, his mum, Marge, is the loveliest of ladies and keeps a firm grip on things. And I think that's when you realise, again, it goes back to what we're talking about, family is so important. And to have someone beside you to occasionally say, "No." And I think that's the weirdest thing in this business. You know it too, Paul, is that people very rarely ever hear the word no. When they get to a certain level, the word no is not there. Whether they're at hotel, in a restaurant, just in normal life, they never ever hear the word no. And Eric Idle, the legendary comedian writer of Monty Python, he always said to me, "The power of no is such a big thing." And it's so, so true. If you can say to someone, "No. No. No." But stars very rarely hear that. And that's what I always think is an interesting thing. And then also my dad always said a great thing, which was "When you're going out with a girl, see how she treats the waiter or the waitress because that's what she's really like." And I think that's another great judge and another measurement, another little barometer of life.

**What are you going to do for the next 10, 15, 20 years? More of the same?**

Wow.

**Is there going to be a pivot?**

I have no idea and I think that's the great thing. And again, one thing that I learned when I went to acting class was to be present. I learned it for going in for an audition and it was to be present in the room. And so when I was experimenting with it I thought this is a great thing that you want to be present in the room, because we've all done it. You go in for an audition for something and you come out and you go, "Oh

my goodness me. I was struggling to remember my lines and I can't remember. And who was there and who... it was the producer. It was the director." Whereas when you're present in the room, life takes on a whole new meaning. And I thought if I can apply that to my life, without sounding too hokey about it, but like when you were a kid and it was coming up to Christmas. Well, you wished away every day until it was Christmas. You were thinking, "There's only 20 sleeps 'til Christmas." As opposed to thinking, "Wow, there's 20 sleeps 'til Christmas, but what a brilliant day today. And then tomorrow there are 19 sleeps." But you didn't think I want these 19 days to go quickly and then I will arrive at Christmas day. It's enjoying every day, enjoying the build up to it. So that's why and I know people think I'm mad. I enjoy getting in the car, going to the airport because I'm going to the airport. I enjoy going through the airport. I enjoy getting on the plane. I enjoy sitting down and getting...

**Although there's Wi-Fi on planes now. So I can get four or five hours just to watch a movie.**

So I enjoy, because I travel a lot and I'm different. I love checking into a hotel. I love that silliness of always saying, "Hi, Ross King. Presidential suite." One time they said, "You can't have it, Mr. King." I went, "Oh," I said, "I just always say that for a laugh." She said, "You can't have it because the president is in the presidential suite." So I think that's the thing about being present and enjoying every single minute of every moment of it and not wishing things away. And that was a brilliant thing that I learned at class.

**What's the best thing you've ever been involved in in your career as you look back now? Because you have fingers in so many pies, if you were reflecting and thought, "That was the best thing I've ever done or that's the most enjoyable thing I've been involved with." What's it been?**

Wow. I hate to say there's so many because it is a bit like picking your favourite child or whatever. Theatre wise, I think doing the Rocky Horror Show. That was one of the hardest things in my life, the singing involved. The fact that you get heckled every single night, in a nice way from the audience, and you had to hit the hecklers. That was probably the hardest thing for my theatre. TV wise, I love live TV. I love the Oscars. I love that red carpet when you have no idea who's coming along and you've got to react to that. So that's great.

**What do you do after the red carpet? Is there a room where you then go watch it on the TV or is there a seat for you in the auditorium?**

No, no, no, no. Then you do watch it. But then for me, the ending is always... we occasionally pop into the Vanity Fair party, just to have a little walk round. And then we all go to either my house or the hotel where some of the crew are staying and we have lobster pizza. Every year, lobster pizza and a drink, too. So, yes. The simple answer is that I'm so lucky, again, back to that word, to do all the things that I've done. I never thought I would be on stage in Vegas. I never thought I'd write a couple of bestselling novels. I never thought that I would play football for Scotland at Wembley. I never thought I'd cover the Oscars for so many years. I never thought I'd

be on KTLA in America. I never thought I'd be in the West End. Even as I say it, I think, "Really, was that me?"

**I feel like a right loser now as you reel off all those achievements.**

I think, again, lucky and to... but again, above everything, health is the big thing and to enjoy it and that's it. It's the balance. Life's a balance and just try and get it right.

**Well, you mentioned there: health, last question then. Have you kind of drank the LA Hollywood Kool-Aid in terms of health? Because everyone here just looks ridiculously healthy and youthful. You do as well.**

Oh really? Well, thank you. I'm not sure I do, but thank you.

**I mean it as an insult, "How dare you look so healthy."**

Yes, no. I think the great thing is it's the weather, isn't it? If I go back to Glasgow and in the middle of winter and you don't want to go out to the gym. You don't want to go for a run. You don't want to go out and play football and then eating wise you think, "Oh, let's just get a take away and get a nice curry." And it's that comfort food. Whereas here, it's sunny. You want to wander around in your shorts and your flip flops. You want to go out and play football, tennis or whatever. You want to go on walks and hikes and then also you want to eat healthfully just because it feels right. So it's easier. I always feel sorry, again, for a lot of people in the UK at times and they think, "Oh, it's all very well." And you go, "Well, it actually is just very well because it encourages you. It's not hard to do it." And I think anyone that ever moves here will do the same thing. It is lovely to still have a great curry or something, but in the main, you want to eat healthier. So it's lucky.

**What do you miss most about not being in Scotland or back in Britain?**

People. The banter. That's the one thing. I love it when I get back to Glasgow. The minute you walk off the plane or even if you walk on the plane to Glasgow, someone will say something in a lovely way. Have some kind of a pop at you, but not in a nasty way.

**They don't do that here, do they?**

No, no. They generally don't. And I love that. You go out with your mates and it's kill or be killed, in the nicest possible way. I love that. And, and again, it's home. You always love going home.

**Ross, you're a total legend. Thank you ever so much for your time. I really enjoyed it.**

A legend. Total legend. Cheers Paul. Thank you.

