

This week I feel a little bit like James Bond in some incredible peace of luck I have found my self late at night sitting on a toilet in the heart of radio I, strange I know but after trying for a year to get an interview with a radio I presenter what more could I do! My plan is to talk to the first presenter that comes in for a wee and then leg it before the Radio one press catch me! Mind it is a Wednesday night and it's around half one in the morning so don't think I am going to be able to exchange witty banter with the big CM. Snash, there's someone coming in (I duck down to hear a whistling sound of a club anthem, I hear the zip go down and that's my queue to strike – out the cubical and off we go).

**Hello mate working late! Hey wait aren't you Benji from the**

**Wednesday night Radio 1 show, (he smiles in an awkward way) that's a cool name, how did you get it?**

The only other name I have gone by is my real name: Benjamin, or Ben. The B is an abbreviation of my surname and Benji was a nickname I was given at school.

**Cool, so what's it like here at the BBC, thinking about doing a bit here and there my self.**

It's an enormous privilege to work for the BBC and every time I step into the studio with the opportunity to share my favorite music with the audience, I feel totally blessed. Radio 1 is the best environment I could ever wish to be in and I have already been made to feel like part of the family.

**(Good answer, wonder if he's clicked what I am doing or just warming up**



**for his show) So how did you end up here?**

My first break in Radio was producing Gilles Peterson's Sunday night live show on Kiss FM. I was 16 years old. It was an amazing time for music back then, and Kiss FM was still good in those days - they had all the best London specialist DJs in the mid 90s. Learning about the studio when the "on air" light is on is something you can only do by being there. It was a great environment to be in and learn about the difference between DJ-ing and broadcasting. I have been in a live radio studio in one way or another for every week of my life since then. Jez Neilson gave me my first job in Radio production when I was 18 years old at a company called 'Someh'in' Else. Back then it was in a basement in Hoxton square and only 6 people

worked for the company. I learnt so much about pre and post production in my time there and experienced a

variety of programming across different networks; both commercial and BBC. I have also been DJing since I was 15 years old, around the UK and all over the world. Club DJing and broadcasting are my two greatest passions, so I was very happy in 2002 when that was recognized by BBC Radio 1 Xtra, who offered me a show on the new network. My first day on air - well...I didn't even speak. It was a mix-tape show back then. After a few months it became the fully presented show that continued for 8 years until last week, when I joined BBC Radio 1. There is a lot more to say, but that's the short version of my radio background!

**Great! But I meant how did you get in to the toilet, I was hoping you could tell me the way out (just in case I need to do a runner, plan ahead, that's my motto) Doing any more international gigs, you must have seen a bit of the world now?**

I'm lucky enough to have DJed all over the world and there are some incredible clubs worldwide and I've had some amazing musical experiences, however I must say that when I come back home to the UK, I realize how fortunate we are to have such an innovative and vibrant club culture.

**Right on, you have my vote (starting to wonder how long I can keep doing this and how long he can keep weeing) So being a master of the decks (see I know some cool slang) what was the first record you bought?**

I can't remember what the first record I bought was but when I was a child, but I was obsessed with the

Radio 1 Top 40 show and used to buy one 7" single a week based on what I had heard. Even as a toddler - I was allowed to buy one a week. One of the first influential records I remember buying as a child was an LP called 'Genius Of Rap' on Island Records produced by Chris Blackwell. I would have been about 5 or 6 years old.

**(He's starting to finish off and has started looking at me a bit strangely, well I do have a note pad, a pen and I am standing beside the pan as we men call them, need to put him at easy, try this one.) So had many strange fans hanging around in your time? (Doh)**

I did have one serious stalker once who used to wait outside the studio and was a bit scary... very disturbed. (He is squinting his eyes at me like he is trying to get a better look, does he recognize me?) Actually I have had a couple of those. They would write monologues to the show email and become totally obsessed. It was a bit disturbing, but eventually they move on and leave you alone!

**(Was that a hint to get lost? Quick throw him a curve ball question) So if you could interview one of the following which one would it be and why – Cliff Richard, Neil Tennant or Fat Boy Slim?**

Cliff Richard: I'd ask him what it feels like to have one of the longest careers in the music industry, and what it feels like after all this time to have a Top 5 record in 2010.

**(Oh no he choose Cliff, suddenly I feel scared and need to use the**

**toilet) So what's in the future for you? (As I look round for the fastest way out).**

To become the best broadcaster I possibly can, and possibly to one day make a great record too.

**(He's really looking at me very strangely, time to get out of here one thinks) So any advice you can give me on becoming a DJ?**

"Do you". It's as simple as that. Stay true to what you believe, don't compromise, and if you play the music that you genuinely love you will always be credible to your audience.

**(As I start moving toward the door a sound of water still flows and I think to myself, he's good! I must let him get in a shameless plug without it being obvious.) So, where's the best time and place to tune in bud? (I was never subtle! I open the door to go and hear him reply.)**

Listen to Benji B on BBC Radio 1, Wednesday nights, 2am-4am, bbc.co.uk/radio1.

And that was that! The great BBC Radio 1 interview and I feel so relieved to get it and from what I heard Benji pass that night I am sure he was relieved too! I can't thank Radio 1 enough for opening up and letting the hot seat in and I hope this allows us to move up the schedule and out of the toilet! Remember if you want to do it then just drop us a line and we'll sneak round to your gaff to eat and drink your food and coffee while you're in the toilet too. Please contact editor@theradiomagazine.co.uk and we'll speak soon.