

## **RODNEY MULLEN INTERVIEW**

**QUESTION:** Stacy mentioned that you had some heavy reservations about participating in a film that delves so heavily into your past.

**RODNEY MULLEN:** I did and there were a couple of levels to that reservation. Literally the day Stacy called me, I was coming off an interview that I stopped midway. I walked away because that specific interview wanted to praise and contextualize what we did in the past at the expense of what we're doing in the present in a very backhanded way. You can easily fall into that [way of thinking], even unintentionally.

The skateboard community as it is today and that sense of belonging—this is it for me. These are things that matter most to me. I understand that yesterday and that past is sewn into the fabric of today and it's not isolated as something different or better or more pure because there was less money. There's a natural tendency to associate the past with being more pure and having more soul. I had a very strong reservation about participating because I want very much to live in the present.

And also because of the way the Bones Brigade dissolved and how afterwards the industry went into a freefall ... I didn't want the emotions of that time to contaminate the perspective of the documentary and that could clearly happen.

I voiced these concerns upfront and Stacy gave a long pause, not because he needed to deliberate but to give these concerns their space. Then he said, "I will guarantee that this will not happen." And he made sure of that throughout.

The other part is that so much of my motivation and what I was dealing with [in the 1980s] comes from a very private home life. Skating was an outlet from home life and it's very much what made me, me. That was my biggest struggle. I can't describe who I was or what I was going through without digging up a lot of that stuff. I didn't want the documentary to be about that or have a lot of footage of me saying things that didn't reflect well on how I grew up. I was very sensitive to that and Stacy could not have been more respectful and supportive.

**Q: You were the last of the Brigade to commit to this film. Did it take long time to feel secure?**

**RM:** Projects like this are never one person's property. They just aren't. They go the way they go. It's a documentary, not fiction. Stacy was very clear and he gave me his word and I believed him—again, this is not a reflection of me

doubting Stacy one iota—but the reality is that these things have a mind of their own. People say what they say on camera and it gets put together and it goes where it goes because a documentarian is after truth—he's not after a predisposed story.

A month had past and it was enough time for an interview to come out and it raised flags [about the film] that were very much beyond Stacy's control. I was already trigger-happy and I started shooting in a sense. I called Tony to basically tell him that I was going to pull out of the documentary. I was so worked up by my own fears. Tony happened to be in Dubai and we talked for a long time. Tony just said, "Look, I'm in and the story needs to be told with you ... maybe Lance could speak for you or I could speak for you, but we need you." He talked sense to me and that recommitted me.

**Q: So the camaraderie you guys shared 25 years ago while in the Brigade came full circle.**

**RM:** That's right. Anyone else could have said what Tony said and I would have taken it with a grain of salt and thought, *That's fine, but my life is pretty good now without the documentary and nothing is worth jeopardizing what I have. Thanks for your advice, but I'm out.* I feel such a connection with Tony and there's a bond of respect.

**Q: How did you feel that Stacy was also the one preparing the questions and doing the interview with you?**

**RM:** That made all the difference. Stacy is very respected in the film world for a reason. One of his gifts is the ability to lock in on whatever you're feeling. He locks in on who you are and allows you to just go with it. He asked me a few things at the beginning and the way he posed the questions had a certain direction and I took another direction and kept going and he just went with it. That's what made it so open and free. I don't know who else I could have opened up with.

**Q: During the 1980s, skateboarding was self-contained and survived on an instinctual DIY ethos. Did this documentary feel like the natural way to cover that era and cultural impact of the Brigade?**

**RM:** Yes. You've got to connect with the person next to you. The team is very much a representation of what you're about, not just what you can do. We were all very selective about who was to be let in and it didn't matter if they were articulate, it was a question of does this guy feel right? When we formally began

and had a meeting at LAX, we had that discussion and Stacy asked, "Who do you feel comfortable letting in?"

**Q: What were your initial thoughts upon seeing the first screening?**

**RM:** Sit still and don't run. I had already done the interviews and I knew what I said and I let a lot of my heart out. I had to come terms and was okay with maybe some people thinking that the heaviness is all that I'm about. When I saw other guys opening up and how it was woven together ... I didn't question much at that first screening.

Immediately, I was engaged with the feel of the movie and its authenticity. There were lots of times I thought, *I never knew that about this person*. Naturally, I cringed and flinched when I saw and heard myself, but by the time it was over I was just dizzy. My thoughts were so loud that I didn't know what was going to come out of my mouth because I was so overwhelmed emotionally. I had to physically put my hand over my mouth because I didn't know what I was going to say. But I felt good inside.