

TO HERE KNOWS WHEN - GREAT IRISH ALBUMS REVISITED

1 by Simple Kid

“ I JUST BAILED OUT AND KIND OF SHUT THE WINDOWS FOR A WHILE...”

Simple Kid - the alias of **Kieran MacFeely** - released *1*, aka *Simple Kid 1*, 20 years ago to widespread acclaim. He was compared to Beck, *Badly Drawn Boy* and *The Guardian* wrote that MacFeely, “gets his pungent social commentary from Dylan, his third-person vignettes from Ray Davies, his swagger from Marc Bolan and his synthesisers, by the sounds of it, from a skip.”

Some sections of the American media didn't take kindly to the Dylan reference: “I can remember doing my first interview in the US and they really took exception to the Bob Dylan reference. ‘Do you realise what Bob Dylan means in America?’ Shit, I didn't write it.”

Kieran had fronted **The Young Offenders** in the late 90s and when that band broke up he spent some time in America. “It was a real reset. I felt really energised, I felt really clear about what I didn't want. I felt with *The Young Offenders* we had lost a lot of integrity,” says Kieran.

He took a different approach to his first album as **Simple Kid**. “It was recorded in my manager's office on an 8-track and a keyboard. I'd go in at about 6pm in the evening. I'd sleep during the day.”



Kieran spent a lot of the next few years on the road, he can easily pinpoint some of the highlights from this period. “I went to the Chrysler Building in New York and did an audition for one of the legendary labels in a boardroom in front of three executives, one of whom was Ric Ocasek from *The Cars*. I was sitting there with an acoustic and a harmonica and my voice was wobbling. It was awful but I got offered the deal.”

Another highlight was appearing on *Later... With Jools Holland*. “Jane's Addiction and John Cale were on the same night. I remember Dave Navarro from *Jane's Addiction* coming into my dressing room and going, ‘Hey man, cool.’ I just like melted. It was the classic “living the dream” as I believe the technical phrase is.”

There were also a number of hiatuses. “I suppose there's a lot of fatigue with me as well. So I just bailed out and kind of shut the windows for a while. There was one of many mental health crises at that point. I was going to therapy sessions. I remember talking about it, but not wanting to go back to that. There was a kind of a whole crash. ‘We've given you what you've always wanted, so now work all day long every day. Don't you dare step off.’ You know.”

After his second album (2005's *2*) Kieran walked away from the music industry. A few years ago he started releasing new songs on his YouTube channel. Last year these songs were released as an album: **Health & Safety**. In April he made a triumphant return to the stage in a sold out Whelan's.

Simple Kid 1 is available on streaming services. *Health & Safety* is available on Bandcamp.



Simple Kid revisits *1* on *To Here Knows When - Great Irish Albums Revisited*, available on all podcast platforms. Episode notes and further information: www.paulmcdermott.ie/podcast

