

## Elton John and Jonathan King

Saturday, 04 July 2015

I've known Reg Dwight for ages; he was the fat, gay piano player doing cover songs for Woolworths and their Embassy cheap vinyl label; he played with John Baldry; he was working for Dick James Music way back in the 60s, when I was a pop star (my first hit, written and recorded as a teenager, had been in 1965). His boyfriend was a mate of mine I called Pamela Motown as he was plugging the label at EMI.

By the 1990s he had hit a bad patch. No hits for some years. He was considered a has been. Huge in the 70s but fading in the late 80s. Career, basically, over.

I interviewed him for Entertainment USA and had dinner with him in America. "Your label is letting you down", I told him in 1989. "You have a fabulous track on your latest album - Healing Hands. It should have been a smash but didn't even crack the top 40. You should rerelease it". "Could you persuade PolyGram to do that JK?", he begged me. I was always up for helping hits become hits; even if they weren't my babies they were someone else's babies and I hate seeing hits flop. "Of course" I replied. "How about Sacrifice" he said. "Yeah, that's not bad but I prefer Healing Hands. Tell you what, do it as a double A side, rerelease it with all royalties going to your silly Aids charity and I'll make sure it's a hit" I said. "Only one thing. I've taken over The Brits as Producer this year. If it is a hit, will you do the show?". "Absolutely" he replied.

It wasn't easy breaking it. Phonogram didn't even have a Managing Director at the time. I persuaded my friend Obie - Chairman of Polygram then - to rerelease it. The plugger at the label, Martin Nelson, was brilliant, a real hard worker. So was Dwight's plugger, Gary Farrow, Virtually single handed they took over, worked the tracks and whoosh, it went to No1 and totally revived Reg's flagging career.

Did he appear on The Brits? Did he heck. I had to fly out to Los Angeles to get a piece of film from him, as he'd also been voted Male Singer of the Year.

To be honest he did apologise profusely. Sitting on his toilet chatting to him as he took a Hollywood shower I complained and he did thank me although, being Elton, he qualified it by saying "Sacrifice was the bigger hit of the two. I was right and you were wrong".

"No, you are Dwight and I am King" I retorted, sticking my tongue out at his naked, wet body.