RETURN OF THE IDLE DRONES

SONG BY SONG. WRITER'S NOTES

1. The King of Liars

Over the last 10 years it seems like it's become normalised for politicians to lie in Parliament without any scrutiny or sanction. Populist politics seems to thrive on these lies, from Farage to Trump, we have a new breed of shady chancers in politics, and in my opinion there is none more so than our current Prime Minister. To me he's the King of Liars.

2. Making Sense of the War

This is about a man returning home after WW2. It's about that stoic generation who just 'got on with it', despite having faced unimaginable horror. I wanted to unpick that a bit and hint that maybe it wasn't all plain sailing. I picked a specific geography for this song in Basford, a district of Nottingham where some of my family lived. Elements of that geography inform the song – the allotments, the railway lines, the soap factory.

3. The Mob of Righteous Fury

I wanted to write a song about social media witch hunts and this is how it ended up. From the witch finder general to Enoch Powell, this is a sweep through 500 years of angry mobs. This one was influenced by late 60s era Scott Walker.

4. Talking it Out

A song about the super rich elites – billionaires, oligarchs, sheiks, royals, arms dealers. I had some very specific people in mind for the characters in this song. I won't say who they are, but if you look for known associates of paedophile billionaire Jeffrey Epstein you won't go far wrong. I tried the Randy Newman approach of making it a bit jaunty and jolly to counter the very dark subject matter.
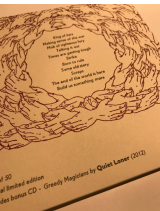
5. Times are Getting Tough

A song about chronic illness and job instability. The days of sick pay and job protection seem far behind us now. I know people who have ended up homeless because they couldn't work through ill health. The safety net has gone. I have my own chronic health problems and so this is close to home. The guitar lick on this is a homage to Wichita Lineman.

6. Strike

A more acoustic sound on this. The song dates back to my residency at the People's History Museum. It's based around the Matchwomen's Strike of 1888 and how some young teenage women created the modern Trade Union movement. A remarkable and inspirational story.

7. Born to Rule

This song is a bit of a crude cartoon caricature of the Bullingdon type of privileged and upper class male. When I worked in lobbying and campaigning I did meet men like this, who embody that fine line between titled and entitled. James came up with this rollicking Britpop style guitar line, which I think makes the song feel like something Suede or Blur might've done.

8. Same Old Story

If you study history you can't help but get the sense that absolutely nothing is new. The same narratives play out time and again. Things progress, somethings certainly get better, but there never was a golden age. The overall narrative remains the same.

9. Scraps

I wrote this as an attack on that kind of instagram/pinterest aspiration culture. I am sick of this American notion infecting our society that success in life is simply a matter of hard work and wanting something enough. It's nonsense.

10. The End of the World is Here

This one came from an apocalyptic dream in which I ended up diving in a lake to escape the fire. Contains my favourite lyric of the whole album – *"one day all this data will be blown away like foam"*. I felt this had a Tom Waits kind of feel and James really nails that with this sort of Marc Ribot style guitar part.

11. Build us Something More

A song for my grandparents generation and the 1945 Labour government's vision of a better society. For my family the NHS, pensions, welfare – all of those changes were revolutionary. Our life expectancies, our education, our health – all vastly improved. We could learn a lot from their ambition

NOTES ON THE FORMAT

I love CD. The sound quality is superior. As an independent self-releasing artist it's cheap to produce and the return is decent. It's portable and easy to carry around and sell at gigs. Streaming offers almost zero income for an artist at my level in the music industry. Vinyl is expensive to manufacture and hard to store.

But Compact Discs are a dying format. No one wants them. So with this release I have decided to pee against that particular wind. I have taken some decisions I hope will increase the desirability of buying a physical product as opposed to download or streaming. Those three things are -

IT'S A BANDCAMP EXCLUSIVE

I am not releasing the album to platforms like Spotify, Deezer, iTunes etc. I have to pay them for the privilege of having my music on there and in return they pay miniscule rates of return. Instead the only place you will find it is on Bandcamp - a platform that gives a fair deal to the artists it relies on. For some artists this could be commercial suicide but I believe that my small but committed band of supporters will not be phased by it.

BONUS TRACKS ONLY ON THE CD

The CD version of the album includes an additional two bonus tracks that won't be released anywhere online.
Poundshop Albion
My Brexit song. I promised myself I wouldn't write one but I did. I loved being a European.
Shoulders of Soldiers
This song was given to me by my friend Kirsty McGee. She said she wrote it but then thought it was more my kind of thing than hers. A song of hope.

IT HAS BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK MADE BY ACTUAL ARTISTS

The CD version of the album comes in a stunningly designed letterpressed package with Kraft paper inserts. I have worked with acclaimed visual artists to produce it. The cover design is by Kev Craig who also designed the artwork for Lanterns on the Lake's Mercury nominated album. It has been put together by acclaimed letterpress artist David Armes - who has been an artist in residence at the British Library and Bodleian Library. Each one is hand printed making it slightly different to the next one.
The CDs are limited to 200 copies which will be handsigned and numbered. 50 of those are deluxe doubles will also include the original Greedy Magicians album, with 3 previously unreleased outakes.