

## Robin Horsfall interview transcript

Interview with Phil Miller on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 11am, Prague.

Recorded by Lou Macnamara.

Transcript by Phil Miller.

### Introduction

00:05:42	<i>Please can you introduce yourself and say who are you.</i>
00:05:48	I'm Robin Horsfall. I was a former member of 22 Special Air Service between 1978 and 1984. I was a contract officer to the Sri Lankan army in 1986. I now live in Prague, and I'm retired.
00:06:08	<i>Thanks Robin. You've had a remarkable and varied career. For people who haven't come across you before or read your book, as you did just then but maybe in a little bit more detail just touch on some of the career highlights that you had before you went into private security just to give people a sense of the breadth of your experience</i>
00:06:28	Sure, sure. I joined the army when I was 15 years old as an infantry junior leader and at the age of 17 I was in the Parachute Regiment. I did 3 tours of Northern Ireland with the Parachute Regiment. I joined the SAS just before - I got into the SAS just before my 22 <sup>nd</sup> birthday. I was one of the assault team at the Iranian Embassy in 1980. I served in the Falklands. I did two further tours of Northern Ireland with the Special Air Service. When I left the British Army in 1984, I was a body guard and a mercenary and a contract soldier to various governments. Until my wife put her foot down and said your not going to do that anymore. I set up a martial arts organisation in London about 30 years ago, which is now one of the most successful martial arts organisations in the south of Britain. I now live in Prague and I'm in semi-retirement. I'm a writer, and a part-time journalist.
00:07:40	<i>Thanks, that was very good. Could you just explain what is special about the SAS compared to the rest of army?</i>
00:07:49	The SAS is called special forces because they do special tasks. They're special at doing those tasks. They can't do everything everybody else does. It's a unit that's very flexible. They have multiple skills. To get into the Special Air Service takes about a year to completely pass their selection. The first 4 weeks are in the mountains where in the final week called test week you complete 5 marches, which is the equivalent of completing 6 marathon runs, with weight on your back, over the mountains, alone in set times. About 10% of the group of volunteers pass that. They then go on to do continuation training where they learn SAS skills in the jungle and various other parts of the world. If they pass that, they then go on to do combat survival training. If they pass that, and they're not already paratroopers, they go on to become paratroopers – they learn how to parachute, do military parachuting. If they pass that they get their cap badge and they join their squadron but they're on probation. Then they have to pass a personal skill. Personal skills are para-medicine, explosives, languages or signals. And they have to pass a troop skill. Troop skills being mountain climbing, mobility which is desert navigation, boats or HALO – high altitude low opening parachuting. So they have to do that in the following six months. If they do that, and they're considered to be acceptable at the end of that period, then they're allowed to stay in for another 2 years,

	and then they're reviewed again. So the standards are incredibly high. The SAS changes its modus operandi according to the needs that are required by the government of the day. They began as reconnaissance troops in jungle training. They then ended up as assault troops in desert warfare. They then moved on to being counter-revolutionary warfare soldiers, counter-terrorism, hostage rescue, and that's changed again where in the Iraq war and in Afghanistan they were involved in other roles like hunting down scud missiles in the desert and destroying those or attacking Al-Qaeda insurgents in caves in the north of Afghanistan so they are very flexible, and that flexibility allows them to change according to the needs of the government.
00:10:28	<i>Would you say the SAS are considered some of the most elite soldiers in the British Army?</i>
00:10:33	Yes, they are the most elite soldiers in the British army, I think everybody accepts that. And probably they are viewed as the most elite special forces group in the world because of their success rate in comparison to other special forces groups. But being special in that regard doesn't make them special at anything else.
00:11:10	<i>Were you one of the SAS soldiers who freed hostages from the Iranian Embassy in London in 1980?</i>
00:11:16	Yes. I was one of the assault team at the Iranian Embassy in 1980. We assaulted, B-Squadron assaulted the Embassy – there were 60 of us in the assault team – that was, what would it have been, six 8-man teams, attacked the building. It had 54 rooms, 5 floors, we cleared it in 11 minutes, killed 5 terrorists, captured 1 and rescued 19 hostages. And its a very special day in British history.
00:11:50	<i>What counter-terrorism experience did you have before you went to Sri Lanka?</i>
00:11:57	Well I'd done two tours with the SAS counter-terrorist team, the Pagoda team, so that was a large part of my specialist training. However, being a soldier on the streets of Northern Ireland for 5 tours was also a huge part of counter-terrorist training, understanding the motivation of terrorist, understanding how they operated, the dangers of operating against them, being part of the security service that was designed to destroy terrorist organisations. It was a pretty in depth background.
	[Sound check]
00:12:43	<i>Moving on to Sri Lanka now. Robin, how did you end up in Sri Lanka and what happened while you were there and why did you leave?</i>
00:12:50	I was working as a bodyguard for Mohammed Al Fayed in London and got a bit bored with the job so I needed something more exciting and volunteered to go and work for a company called KMS, a British company run by a former SAS officer called David Walker. We were deployed to Sri Lanka as training officers. However, as is often the case I was later to find was you often end up on the ground as a training officer and then the battle front comes to you rather than you going to the battlefield. We were sent to the North of Sri Lanka, a place called Maduroya, between Pulanuraha and Trincomalee – to train, to run a battle school for the officer cadets who had just finished their training at Kandy, and this was the final part of their training before they were deployed to operate against the Tamil Tigers in the North of Sri Lanka.
00:13:53	<i>What did you see while you were there at that base?</i>
00:13:59	Initially I enjoyed the work. I was training bright young men with good educations. We

	<p>were teaching them counter-terrorist drills as we knew them and as we functioned in the United Kingdom with the rule of law. We gave them intelligence briefing, we gave them briefings on what was acceptable behaviour, and it was only after our first pass out group came back to us afterwards and explained to us what they'd experienced that it became a moral dilemma. Some of the officer cadets came back and said that in spite of all the training that we'd given them they were being asked to necklace prisoners with tyres and burn them alive. I didn't witness this, it was only word of mouth from the young men who came back to me and were very distressed about it. They didn't like where they'd ended up, it wasn't what they expected to be as sub-alterns in the Sri Lankan army.</p>
00:15:13	<p><i>Is that what you'd expected to be dealing with then you were there or was this something that led to you deciding to leave Sri Lanka?</i></p>
00:15:20	<p>Well I understood what the issues were in Sri Lanka and that there was a conflict going on. The job was, I fitted the role for the job – running a battle school, that wasn't a real problem for me. I ended up running a medical centre just behind the front line to take casualties out because I seemed to be the highest medical authority in the region at the time. What really was the tipping point was when I got back to Colombo for a weekend and a South Africa helicopter pilot was explaining one of his experiences and he told me that he'd been responding to a vehicle ambush where a Sinhalese, a Sri Lankan vehicle had been blown up by a road mine, and he flew over it to give it air cover in a Huey Bell helicopter. As he flew over the area his door gunner opened up and shot every man, woman, child and animal that he could get his eyes on. And in response to that he flew his helicopter much higher to prevent him from doing that. But there were no recriminations for him doing that. It was considered to be perfectly acceptable by those people that were in charge of that group. And he was quite distressed about it as well and was deciding whether he wished to stay or not. For me it was a tipping point. There was nothing I could do. I was a fairly young man, I was coming up to 30, I had no authority. There were no press in the north of the country, there was no body you could take the story to. So I just simply decided to go home, and went home, so I'd only been there four months – it was enough. Interestingly enough, just after I got home, I was offered a job by somebody representing the Tamil Tigers, from Tamil Nadu in India, and erm but a hand was placed lightly on my shoulder and I was told it wouldn't be in my best interests to go and work for the other side as the British government didn't want to be seen to be supporting both sides of the conflict.</p>
00:17:36	<p>Thanks Robin. [Sound check]</p>
00:18:35	<p><i>Robin, before you went to Sri Lanka, when you were still in the SAS, did you hear about KMS while you were in the SAS and what sort of reputation or impression did it give you?</i></p>
00:18:49	<p>Yeah when I was in the Special Air Service everyone knew about KMS. It was one of the early companies set up to provide military services to foreign governments. They'd had a lot of success with Sheikh Yamani who was the oil minister for Saudi Arabia at the time providing bodyguards for him, and built their company on the prestige that came from that. And they were nominally, nominally is not quite the right word, but they were linked to members of the British government in a deniable way. So the operations that they were part of were supported and were supported by the British government at the time. We all knew about them, and when we left, many of us hoped</p>

	that we would get a job with them.
00:19:57	<i>Last time we met you mentioned that when you were in the SAS you went to Oman briefly for an exercise, and that there might have been a KMS contract in Oman, I think training the Sultan's special forces. Could you elaborate on that?</i>
00:20:14	Yes, that one probably sits in the back of my memory now, it's a long time ago. I think KMS were in the early days supplying officers to SOAF – Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces. And a lot of the men from the SAS did operate as officers in the Omani army, with a great deal of success, in charge of the Omanis and of the Baluchis. And I was down there a couple of times myself running medical programmes and another time running a British army training team with the Baluchi down in Salalah. And so that was a very very good job and the guys had very stable careers working for a country that wasn't in conflict and the battles that took place in the early 70's down in Dhofar which were, which the SAS were a great part of, had finished by that time.
00:21:18	<i>And is that how the SAS came to be involved in Oman was in the Dhofar [war]?</i>
	Even before that. The SAS got involved in with Oman because they helped the current Sultan overthrow his father in the late 50s [sic] – a captain Peter de la Billiere, later General de la Billiere, led a raid on the Jebel Akdar where they climbed a 12,000 foot mountain at night, scaling the cliffs, and out flanked the last bastion of the old Sultan's forces and put the new Sultan into power [sic] and because of that they had a long term arrangement with that country every since.
00:22:15	<i>Within the Regiment, the Dhofar veterans, the Oman veterans, had a kind of special status. They saw themselves as kind of superior to younger guys who hadn't been in Dhofar. Could you just elaborate on that a little bit and whether that tension was replicated in KMS as well?</i>
00:22:40	Yeah. In the mid-70s there was very much a division in the SAS between those former soldiers who'd served and seen combat in the deserts of Oman and those of us who came later who'd spent our earlier years facing the bullets and bombs in Northern Ireland. The older guys considered themselves to be more experienced and superior, however the younger ones of us thought the bullets heard just as much in either area of the conflict. There was also very much a divide between the young up and thrusting corporals and sergeants of that era compared to those of the 1960s. They were better educated, better skilled and had higher skill levels as soldiers so the seniors tended to feel threatened by these young more qualified people coming up beneath them and rather than show them off, tried to keep them down. And that created an awful lot of tension, and that tension carried on when the jobs became civilian jobs, because the older [Op] Storm vet type of individual tended to be the person who was placed in charge, because the people running the company were familiar with them from that period.
00:24:10	Pause [Sound check]
00:25:34	<i>Robin, KMS is quite an unusual name. What do you think it stood for?</i>
00:25:39	Oh it wasn't for anything in particular. It was for Keenie Meenie Services. So it was a bit of a joke, and it stuck. So KMS was Keenie Meenie Services. That's what it stood for.
00:25:50	<i>Do you know where that name comes from?</i>

00:25:53	Yeah Keenie Meenies, it's just a term used by soldiers for people who are very keen and nasty at their jobs and very eager to do well. Keenie Meenie -that's where it comes from. Probably a Scottish saying.
26.18	<i>Did you approach KMS looking for a job or did they head hunt you – how did it work?</i>
26.24	No I approached them. We have a system, or used to have a system called the circuit. Where/and it's called a circuit because people go from one job to another, so they tend to leave one and somebody else will step into their shoes, and leave one and step into their shoes – so it was called the circuit. And we knew about the job in Sri Lanka, and you just send your CV in, people know that your looking for a new job or a job, go for an interview – their office used to be just down off Knightsbridge, and you'd go down and have an interview and if they thought you were appropriate they'd put you on the ground quite quickly.
27.08	<i>Why did you decide to work for KMS in Sri Lanka and what did the company tell you to expect?</i>
27.18	Two things – I was bored with the job that I was in, as a bodyguard. Bodyguarding's a dull lifestyle. Complacency's your biggest enemy so it's good to leave when your bored. And the pay was relatively good for the time. I think we got about two thousand a month offshore, which was an awful lot more than I'd been used to getting in the British Army. We're talking about 1986 here, so there weren't a huge number of jobs in conflicts that we've seen develop since then. There were few and far between. So I was quite pleased to get the work – it paid my bills.
28.04	<i>How did two thousand pounds compare to what you got in the British Army?</i>
28.07	I think, it's hard to recall, but I think my income, monthly income as a corporal in the SAS was about twelve hundred a month – it could have been less, so you're talking about another third on top. My pay with Mohammed Al Fayad was probably somewhere in between the two.
28.37	<i>Did the army prepare you well for civie street or did it sort of push you in to doing private security – were there other careers that you'd like to have done – I think you mentioned that the Royal Engineers would have given you more/other skills?</i>
28.52	Well my brother joined the British Army when I was 19 or 20, my younger brother – and he asked me what I should join, and I said don't join the infantry, I said join the REME [Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers], join the Royal Engineers, join something that gives you a trade – and he joined the REME. I appreciated by the time I was 20 that the skills that I learned as an infantryman weren't of value to me anywhere else but in the British Army. I brought myself out of the British Army when I was 27, when I purchased my discharge from the Special Air Service. And the only civilian qualification I had was as a paramedic. And I would have chosen that career had there been jobs available for me at that time. But the pay was there, I had one child, another child on the way, a mortgage, so I went where the money was, and so I wasn't an adrenaline junkie or an adventurer, I was somebody who needed to pay the bills and these were the skills I had. The British Army for somebody who is leaving after 12 years didn't do anything to ease me into the civilian world apart from point me in the direction of the companies that used the skills I had.
30.18	<i>Thanks Robin... You mentioned the office in Knightsbridge – I think we've got a photo of it here</i>

30.45	Yeah it's off Kings road actually isn't it?
30.48	<i>Is it on Abingdon Road?</i>
30.49	That's it Abingdon Road, that's the one, still the same one, Abingdon Road.
30.55	<i>And what happened at that, did you have an interview at that building?</i>
30.57	Yeah
31.00	<i>And is that how you started working for KMS?</i>
31.02	Yeah you go to the office, got an appointment, up the stairs, have a chat with however interviews you. The person who interviewed me was a really good officer, former officer called Di Pritchard. And I was given the job, no problems. I was given a briefing, and that briefing didn't involve being involved in the conflict directly, which didn't transpire, but I was quite happy to go and do what I was being asked to do which was to be a training officer and run a battle school.
31.41	<i>Looking back now do you feel misled at all by KMS when they recruited you?</i>
31.46	No, I don't think KMS deliberately misled me in any shape or form. These things tend to take on a life of their own on the ground and in subsequent conflicts like when I was in Mozambique, these things take on a life of their own. You don't go to the battlefield, the battlefield comes to you. I ended up running my own casualty clearing station up in Maduroya for wounded soldiers coming back. People were getting attacked on the road between us and Polunura. So it there was nothing sneaky or deceitful about what KMS did – they put us on the ground with all the best intentions, but in the circumstances we had to be flexible and adjust to them. You were a volunteer, and an employee, so if you don't like it, it was up to me and I left.
32.28	<i>Great thanks Robin. Could you just explain a bit more about some of the things you saw in Sri Lanka – you mentioned necklacing earlier, I know its very gruesome but if that's one of the episodes that maybe you could explain a little bit more.</i>
33.03	Yep. To make it clear I didn't see necklacing, I was told about necklacing by the young officer cadets that had returned from missions and they came back and they were very distressed because they'd been involved with necklacing prisoners. And that means you put a burning rubber tyre over somebody and burn them to death, or use it as a form of torture. So its a terribly – burning somebody alive essentially to punish them, to hurt them, to create shock, that's what they were being asked to be involved with as soldiers and they weren't happy about it.
33.52	<i>Why, I think its fairly obvious but why did you decide to leave Sri Lanka? KMS might say that it was helping a legitimate government fighting a terrorist organisation. How would you respond to that point of view?</i>
34.08	I left because I wasn't happy with the role that I was being asked to fulfil. There were a lot of undercurrents that were immoral. They were wrong. It doesn't matter if somebody legitimises a government or recognises a government, it doesn't make them right. There's been a terrible genocide that's taken place in Sri Lanka over the past generation, the Indian government have tried to stop it, the Tamil Tigers have tried to stop it, and nobody has succeeded. And now the Tamils are a very tiny minority, and a frightened minority that still exist in the country under fear and I'm frightened that eventually there are going to be no Tamils in Sri Lanka at all.

35.04	<i>Thank you. Clearly you had your own concerns about what was happening in Sri Lanka. Did any of your KMS colleagues share your concerns or was it difficult or dangerous to speak out too much about these feelings?</i>
35.24	It wasn't difficult or dangerous to speak about them amongst ourselves. Nobody actually brought them up to the command structure above us, the Sri Lankan command structure, and I don't know if anybody brought them to the notice of the leaders of KMS, I don't know. I was too much of a junior person to have the confidence to directly bring these things to their notice. I was very inexperienced. I'd only been out of the army about 15 months so it was a world that was very unusual to me and this was my first real civilian-military job. The only thing I could really do was leave. So I drove to Colombo on a weekend, pretended that I was sick, refused to go back on the transport. Created the circumstances for, to be called into the office, gave the wrong answers and was put on a plane home.
36.24	<i>What do you mean by the wrong answers?</i>
36.27	Essentially your talking to a former officer in the British Army, his name was Brian Baty, and its about being obtuse, or stropo – not kowtowing to his authority, not giving it yes sir no sir whatever you want sir, I'm really sorry sir, and so essentially creating the circumstances to leave. So I never signed a paper saying I'm so disgusted with what's going on here, I didn't think, I don't think that I had the confidence to do that. But inside I was pretty upset about the whole affair.
37.20	<i>Thanks you. Are you aware of any other KMS staff leaving either around that time or later on and why do you think other guys stayed out there for longer periods of time?</i>
37.35	I think other guys stayed out there for fairly good reasons. They weren't involved in the conflict themselves directly, so whatever was talking place further north they could simply say well its not me that's doing that, I'm not training the troops to do that, we're not encouraging the troops to do that, if they're doing that it's not our responsibility. So they create a separation between themselves and the morality of the problem. The other thing is that they've got to pay their bills, and they've got to feed their children and so on. So, they stayed for lots of reasons. Others left at different times – people moved on around the circuit. Others took their places. I don't really know.
38.36	<i>Just now you described the conflict in Sri Lanka as a genocide, I think in other places you've referred to it as ethnic cleansing. Can you give us examples of what you heard or experienced that made you reach that conclusion?</i>
38.50	Well only the previous answers where I've described the killings from helicopters by door gunners, and the necklacing of prisoners. But there are other since then there have been several reports on television about the terrible things that have gone on in Sri Lanka and yet they seem to be very short lived, you don't see them for long periods of time, its almost like the world, the people in power don't want the world to know about it. I know that the Sinhalese have controlled the media from the time when I was there, the press never got further north than Anaradnupura, so they controlled what the press had and what they knew, and we've seen the situation in Sri Lanka develop over the last 30 years, and we've seen the results of that, and nobody's protested, nobody's stood up and said somebody should stop this. Maybe it's because there's no oil there, I don't know, or nothing worth, nothing for governments to fight for.
40.02	<i>Thank you...Robin, while you were in Sri Lanka did you see any sign of British</i>

	<i>government involvement with KMS? And you've also used the word "deniable" in terms of the contact KMS had with the British government.</i>
40.45	Yeah there was close social arrangements that went on between KMS and the charge d'affairs at the British embassy there. So socially they were involved and you would get to go for a drink in the embassy if you were one of those individuals. So there were close associations but they were social and unofficial, which is very often the way these things are done. Its exactly the same as spying – a spy will be on the diplomatic staff, he won't have a role, and any engagement he has with people will be on a social basis not on an official, recorded basis.
41.27	<i>And following on from that you've mentioned the charge d'affairs and some of these diplomatic posts being used by intelligence officers as cover. Do you feel because of the sensitivities around KMS, the number of SAS veterans involved, whether the connection was more through MI6 to keep it more deniable?</i>
41.53	I don't know really, it's not my area of expertise – no I don't really know.
40.02	<i>You mentions at the start that KMS was run by Major David Walker, could you tell us who he was and what expertise or background he had for running a private security company like KMS?</i>
42.19	I don't know too much about David Walker apart from the fact that he was an ex-Special Air Service major and that he set up KMS which was one of the earliest companies and I think he set it up on a whim and developed it. So it was an unknown venture. Other companies of that nature didn't exist at the time, the only previous business models had been the recruitment of real mercenaries for operations like the Congo and Angola, which were riddled with all kinds of corruption and problems. David Walker formed a proper legitimate company and imposed, tried to impose strong moral regulations and military regulations into that business. But your dabbling in very muddy waters so its very hard to get that kind of thing right.
43.19	<i>And in your opinion do you think David Walker had a close relationship with parts of the British government in order to set up a firm like that or to make it successful, to keep getting contracts?</i>
43.31	I don't know if he had any requirement to be involved with members of the British government to set the business up, but I'm fairly sure that the old boy network of Sandhurst officers and the class system which was very very prevalent during that period of the late 20 <sup>th</sup> century meant he was good friends with people who were in the Ministry of Defence, who were in MI6, and who were members of government. So I mean Airey Neive who was murdered by the IRA was a former member of the Special Air Service.
44.15	<i>So those kind of political connections would have come in handy?</i>
44.15	Yeah – personal and political - yeah
44.20	<i>Do you think KMS stood out from the other private security companies at that time – did it seem to be more successful or better connected?</i>
44.32	I think KMS at that time was probably one of the only security companies of that nature, so it was the first. Before that they had been very much jobs that came up and somebody would go and find a few guys and take them out in the field, hopefully get them paid and then come home and that was the end of the story – so it was a one job

	company – whereas here was a company that was staying on the ground, had a proper office in London, was a registered company – and so he made a more legitimate system.
45.10	<i>Why do you think there was a need for companies to do that? Couldn't the MOD have just sent the SAS directly to Sri Lanka to train Sri Lankan forces? What was the benefit of it being a private company?</i>
45.23	I don't think there was a need for it, but when the company was set up it may have been convenient to have a deniable organisation support the wishes of the British government.
45.37	<i>[Break]</i>
54.05	<i>Robin, when you were in Sri Lanka working for KMS, you came across a member of staff called Brian Baty. Could you tell us a little bit more about who he was, what experience he brought to the company and also why he might have been using an alias, while he was working for the company, the alias being Ken Whyte – I don't know if that's a name you came across him using at all?</i>
54.30	Yeah his name was Ken Whyte – Brian Baty was a former SAS Major. He run training wing when I was going through training wing and selection. I would assume that the reason for using a pseudonym was simply to remain anonymous because of the continuing Irish threat perhaps, I don't know -
54.55	<i>Is that a threat that Brian Baty had a particular bad experience of?</i>
55.00	No we would have all been vulnerable to that however he was the one in the public domain dealing with the authorities in Colombo so it would seem like a sensible precaution to take.
55.16	<i>And why would there be an Irish threat to him, could you just spell it out, was it because of having served during the Troubles?</i>
55.23	Yeah well the Special Air Service were responsible for more than 90% of the deaths of IRA terrorists in Northern Ireland and so they would be premium targets, not just then but in the long-term future. So you would do everything you could to keep your name out of the public domain during that period. The conflict in Northern Ireland was still going on quite strongly in 1986.
55.58	<i>When you arrived in Sri Lanka, what kind of set up did KMS have? You mentioned that they had an office in Colombo – what was the scope of their operations beyond the work that you were doing for them?</i>
56.14	Well they provided military and police services – so they had a team down in the south in the luxury of Galle and the coast line down there, training the police service, and they had the military which was my team up in the dark outback of Maduroya living in left over construction site surrounded by snakes and crocodiles, with very very primitive facilities – and they were running both teams. They had an office in Colombo which everything operated from. All the other facilities provided by the police service or the military.
57.01	<i>And in terms of the police training, were the guys involved in that more of the Oman veterans, and was it regular police that they were training or was it a more specialist unit.</i>

57.17	No they were training regular police forces but they were training them with firearms so the police role would have been a para-military role, a bit like the gendarmarie. So it was weapons handling for policemen and perhaps riot control tactics. But nothing of any great depth. There was no division between Oman vets and anybody else. All the guys that were up in the military team were former SAS whereas the group training the police were less qualified and some of them were drawn from regular infantry units of the British Army like the Paras.
57.59	<i>Thank you. You mentioned that you met some helicopter pilots in Colombo. I've read in other places that KMS staff were flying helicopters for the company – can you tell us a bit about your experience or what you learnt about that side of KMS' operations while you were there?</i>
58.20	My only knowledge of working with, my only knowledge about the helicopter pilots was that they were there. Until on one weekend I met one of them, a South African, and we had a couple of beers, he told me about his bad experiences as a pilot, about the killings by his door gunner, and outside of that I know very very little about the helicopter pilot set up.
58.52	<i>Your impression was that the pilot who you spoke to was from KMS but the door gunner was a Sri Lankan?</i>
58.55	Yeah the pilot was a foreign employee and the remaining staff, the door gunners and so on, were Sri Lankan armed forces.
59.08-20	<i>Another aspect that we've spoken about before was that KMS brought out an ex-British army intelligence corp officer (Yep), to Sri Lanka to teach intelligence gathering techniques (Yep) to junior officers at the base near Trincomalee (Yep) – can you tell us a bit more about what those techniques involved and why/what a former British army intelligence corp officer had to offer?</i>
59.42	Again its not really my field of expertise and its a long time ago so its very difficult for me to elaborate on that. I don't really know or I don't remember.
59.55	<i>That's ok – do you remember that person coming out?</i>
	Yes I do
1.00.03	<i>Just so we have it in your words rather than mine, could you just retell that</i>
1.00.05	I remember an intelligence officer coming to Maduroya, I remember him operating and training the officers and helping them with their intelligence gathering systems, helping them to produce good information rather than operating on poor information or speculating and it seemed like a very useful thing to give to the officer cadets at the time.
1.00.37	<i>In terms of other people coming to the camp you were at, the Charge d'affairs from the British embassy came to the camp and saw what was going on.</i>
1.00.52	Yeah we had a visit from the British charge d'affair who came and visited, very much a social occasion, come and meet the guys, have a couple of beers - what his purpose was for visiting I don't know but it made it absolutely clear that he knew who we were, why we were there and what we were doing.
1.01.19	<i>In terms of the unit you were training, you said they were very junior army officers. Could you just elaborate on how many you were teaching, what kind of techniques?</i>

1.01.30	Yeah we were running a battle school. So the techniques we were teaching them were standard infantry tactics. They were clearing woods, a camp attack, anti-ambush drills, basic infantry tactics, section attacks, company attacks, so they would have been the standard things you would teach to any infantryman in any decent army throughout the world.
1.01.58	<i>The issue of interrogation or how prisoners are treated is very contentious in Sri Lanka. Did you teach any interrogation techniques and if so what did they involve?</i>
1.02.07	No we didn't teach interrogation techniques at all, we didn't give advice on that particular subject. It wasn't in our remit.
1.02.20	<i>The other KMS staff that you were working with – who was in charge? I think you mentioned that Tom Morrell was someone who you raised concerns with</i>
1.02.33	Yeah. Tom Morrell was in charge of the team when I was there. He's a former SAS sergeant, a Fijian, another member of B Squadron who was at the Iranian embassy in London. It was his job to control our jobs and deploy us on various tasks. I had an issue with him on one occasion, when he asked me to deploy to Jaffna for a reconnaissance and I refused because I said it wasn't in my terms of employment to go to Jaffna.
1.03.07	<i>Was there any kind of implication about what going to Jaffna would have entailed?</i>
1.03.12	Well it was very clear that anybody that was going to Jaffna was going to get shot at. Everything that was on the ground, that was on the road, was getting blown up, and there was no purpose for me to go there. And when I tried to get clarification he said he just wanted me to go and take a look. And I didn't see any reason to go and take a look. If there'd had been a purpose, if there'd been a role, if there'd been something in my employment contract that had said 'you may be asked to do this' then that's a different story but I wasn't unnecessarily going to put my life at risk to please somebody, I didn't understand the reason. He then asked several other members of the team and they all refused as well.
1.03.59	<i>Is that because they'd been raising concerns or because ...</i>
1.04.03	No I think that once one person stands up and says no the others then realise 'I'll say no as well', it made sense to them too. Why would you send somebody into a dangerous situation without any valid reason for doing so. I think perhaps Tom wanted to put me under some kind of pressure.
1.04.31	<i>Why would he want to do that?</i>
1.04.31	Maybe we weren't getting on
1.04.34	<i>It sounds like quite a lot of the KMS guys in Sri Lanka had been involved in the Iranian Embassy siege, or at least a couple. Could you give us a sense of firstly how many KMS guys there were in Sri Lanka and then how many of them had the Iranian Embassy ...</i>
1.04.55	Well everybody that was there was working for KMS. I don't know I mean the Iranian Embassy siege was just one tiny little mission in a whole history of special forces missions so it doesn't carry any great weight or importance as to who was there – I don't recall anybody else who was on that particular job apart from me and Tom at the time.
1.05.23	<i>Were all of the KMS staff British or were there other nationalities working for the company?</i>

1.05.36	Yeah they were predominately British – Tom being a British Fijian. And there were a few South Africans and Rhodesians as you'd call them then.
1.05.51	<i>And did they have a similar special forces background to you guys?</i>
1.05.56	Yeah most of them were – the pilots no, the pilots were pilots, military pilots, anybody – there were occasional people that crept in from the Rhodesian SAS.
1.06.18	<i>Could you tell us what happened when you got back to Britain?</i>
1.06.23	When I got back to Britain I was very much ostracised from the market, from the circuit, for a while, and I found it very difficult to get a job. So I essentially created a job of my own, running a small door team in Hereford until things picked up, but as is with all these cases, needs must, but needs must from the company's point of view as well, and there were very very few people of my qualifications available and eventually other jobs came along.
1.06.58	<i>Was that with KMS or with other...?</i>
1.07.00	No I never worked with KMS again. I did get offered a job for KMS again working with the Omani police but the pay wasn't high enough and I turned it down.
1.07.09	<i>When you came back to Britain was there an initiative by some veterans to try and train the Tamils?</i>
1.07.25	Yeah, yeah, when, a job came down the grapevine to those of us that were living in Hereford saying that there's work available training people in Tamil Nadu and that meant we were training Tamil Tigers to go and fight the Sinhalese Sri Lankan army and before I got the chance to consider it seriously enough I had a light tap on the shoulder from some anonymous person to say we wouldn't approve of that, and if you do that, we can't stop you however we'll make sure you never work again. So I didn't do it.
1.08.12	<i>And who do you think that person was operating on behalf of?</i>
1.08.15	He was operating on behalf of the Foreign Office.
1.08.20	<i>And why did they not want British mercenaries...?</i>
1.08.21	Yeah they didn't want British involvement on both sides of the conflict, that was the explanation I was given.
1.08.31	<i>Do you get a sense from that that the British wanted, the Foreign Office wanted in a sense they were giving some kind of backing to what KMS was doing? They were happy with that direction?</i>
1.08.46	Yeah I think they were, I think that they were supporting what they considered to be the legitimate government against a terrorist organisation. And that would have been their justification for that particular stance.
1.09.00	<i>Do you know what happened to KMS after you left – what did they carry on doing in Sri Lanka or in other parts of the world and are they still working today?</i>
1.09.15	I don't think they're still functioning as a company. I think many of their top executives have now aged and moved on, maybe become associated with other companies or done well enough to retire. The final nail in the coffin of KMS was probably the Oliver North issue with Nicaragua and the US government. I don't know the ins and outs of that particular case but it got into the public domain, questions were asked in Parliament, David Walker was named and he was also named in investigations in the

	USA and I think that was the end of KMS.
1.10.00	<i>I know it's not an episode that you are that familiar with but if you just tell us in broad strokes more about who Oliver North was or what was happening in Nicaragua, how was KMS involved?</i>
1.10.10	I don't remember the details to be fair, so rather than try to and get it wrong, I'd rather just leave it at that.
1.10.25	<i>Do you feel – so sometimes KMS is referred to as a mercenary company rather than a private security company. Do you feel that was ever an accurate description of what KMS was doing?</i>
1.10.37	Yeah well it depends on your interpretation of the word mercenary. If a mercenary is a paid soldier, or a voluntarily paid soldier, then every member of the British army is a mercenary. Any member of a standing army is a mercenary. If you look at a mercenary as somebody who is prepared to do anything for money, and you end up with criminal activities such as took place in the Congo, then that's another particular aspect of mercenary work. And in the time when I was working, we would refer to ourselves as contract soldiers. Which is just another way of changing the word mercenary into something that means exactly the same thing. It's not the word, it's the interpretation of the word or the role that the person's been given to play. So, a standing army – full of mercenaries, a conscript army perhaps they're not because they are volunteers, a mercenary involved in Angola or the Congo without any kind of government control, a bunch of bandits, which is a better description of them when they were down there, and then you've got the jobs that we had which were very strictly controlled and we would regard ourselves as contract soldiers – but mercenary would encompass all of them to some degree.
1.12.09	<i>Thank you – How would you respond to people who might feel that KMS, not the ordinary staff but David Walker or people running the company, by spending so many years in Sri Lanka while the situation was deteriorating, and continuing to work with the armed forces, have some kind of responsibility for some of the atrocities that the Sri Lankan forces perpetrated – I mean the helicopter pilots might be the best example in terms of they were the most operationally involved perhaps – what would be your view on that?</i>
1.12.45	Well I suppose if your running a company, a company's job is to make money. If your an individual, then you have to have the integrity to take your own moral stance. I don't think they supported atrocities, I don't think they were in any way involved in atrocities. Sometimes the atrocities involved them, the battle front came to you. If they knew about them, and I don't know whether they did, then the choices they made looking back may have been the wrong ones. But they may well have been the right ones for the survival of their business.
	[Interview ends]