

*Hello There and thank you for landing on this page, a few extracts from my debut novel – A Crafty Cigarette – Tales of A Teenage Mod, - please read on and enjoy !!*

*Matteo Sedazzari - A Crafty Cigarette – Tales of A Teenage Mod*

*Author*

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### **Foreword by John Cooper Clarke**

Anybody who is anybody has worn the three button uniform and that's official. Mod is a train of thought and its destination is the personal refinement and ultimate sophistication of the individual citizen by way of his own aesthetic judgement. The production values of Mod persist even into old age (unless some kind of severe mental breakdown intervenes) because their agility is non restrictive. The Neapolitan or Continental suit for example, was popularised in America and given to the World in movies, why, because it is class, classless and looks good on all shapes. Matteo Sedazzari got the Modinest bug from the sharp silhouettes of his heroes, Rick Buckler, Bruce Foxton and Paul Weller AKA The Jam and who could deny their monochrome allure. It's almost impossible to write the way you speak (name one) but Signor Sedazzari has that gift, and in his chuckle heavy account of his teenage escapades, obsessions, senseless capers of one kind or another, and his good humoured keeping of the faith in the face of disappointment, has film treatment written all over it. I even get a name check but rest assured no gratuitous ego massage took place in this transaction. From time to time he is apologetic and accuses himself of boring you with the details, but this is our world today where the details are in the field and dressed by such a discerning eye, magical. I couldn't put it down because I couldn't put it down.

John Cooper Clarke August 2015

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### **Chapter IV – Only When I Laugh**

I have to lie and say yes, but they are not. All the crowd make a natural circle, bit like a boxing ring, my grandfather loves Henry Cooper. My parents tell me they used to see him around Soho. My grandfather and Bill face each other, my uncle steps in, talks to both of them and asking for a clean fight, just like the referee in boxing. He steps back and the fighting starts, everyone is on my grandfather's side, oh yea I am as well, all I hear is

"Go on Ernie,"

"Chin him Ernie"

"Jab, hook, upper cut"

It's a good fight, and it is clear that Bill can box too, like a proper match; they break and have a drink, not sure if boxers drink beer and eat bacon sandwiches during their rests, but Bill and my grandfather do. The whole street is excited; me, my brother and my cousins are loving it. It lasts some time before my grandfather, like Henry Cooper, lands a punch that knocks Bill to the floor. My

uncle goes over, counts to ten and pulls my grandfather's arm in the air, he's won by a KO and the whole street celebrates.

The next thing Bill is sitting with the whole family at the Christmas table, having lunch with us, joking with my grandmother and grandfather, it's like nothing has happened, and the fight has settled this bad feeling. If it had been at school it would have been the usual stand on the hall stage whilst Mrs Titchener goes on and on and on. This way it's dealt with and they move on, a much better way of doing things. Bill is now the centre of attention, I can't believe this, usually it's us, the younger children. Then, after lunch, my uncle starts to play his records again and everyone starts dancing. My grandmother and aunts, even my mother starts saying what a good dancer Bill was at dance halls in the 50s and 60s, we all stop dancing and let Bill do his stuff. He is good, like the way he moves, he is really good, I am watching, hopefully can remember his moves. He looks at me, winks then he seems to have trouble breathing, he's panting, he clutches his heart and collapses on the floor. My uncle runs over, looks for a heartbeat, feels his pulse, seen that loads of time on television, he looks at all of us and says "he's dead"

This is the best Christmas I have ever had.

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## **Chapter VI -Just a Cheese Sandwich**

First Top of The Pops appearance The Jam couldn't appear playing live as I think they were in America, so they played the video instead. Weller looked amazing in a paisley scarf, Foxton giving it his all and Buckler mean moody and magnificent, must get a paisley scarf, but I did say that to myself in November. My brother and I loved the video; even my father and mother said it was a good song. The next week they were Number One again, my father and mother had gone out and my brother had gone round to his girlfriend's house and, for some reason, I was happy to watch it on my own. I wasn't going to invite any friends round; I had become a fan on my own. OK, Peter, Mark and my brother helped me, but it was me on my own listening to their music over and over again, they became mine, a voice of reassurance and a window to the outside world and they still are.

I am so pleased I did watch it on my own, they looked like heroes, well they are heroes, playing a wonderful song. Weller with this Heinz Creamed Tomato Soup apron on, but wearing it inside out, love it, really love it, only he can make wearing an apron look good. Bruce and Rick look strong and commanding, then at one point Weller slightly gazes to the camera, like he's sharing the moment with all their fans, and saying to us "we done it, thank you." I break into tears, real tears, I have never been moved by an emotion like this before. Of course I have cried before due to being hurt but this was out of pride, we had done it, we really had done it, fuck the teachers, fuck Rydens, fuck PC MacDonald, fuck Mr Bates, fuck the shop keeper, fuck Pemberton, The Jam are Number One.

After Top of The Pops I turn off the TV and sit in total silence, I am thinking and reliving what I have just seen, the greatest appearance ever on Top of The Pops. Then I start to wish my father had bought one of those video recorders; Christopher, Mott and Vinnie have got one, wondering whether they had recorded it and knowing full well it's pointless asking Vinnie as he hates The Jam. My mother and father came back around 10 p.m. and the first thing I say to my mother "Could you buy me a Heinz Creamed Tomato Soup apron please?"

"Do you need one for Home Economics class then?" she replies.

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## **Chapter - VIII A Bag of Chips**

Thomas starts running towards us and fast, we stop kicking Dennis, who isn't moving. Then Thomas leaps in the air, pushes his right leg out and his leg behind his back, thinking he's Grasshopper from Kung Fu. We ain't no real experts in fighting but we can see in advance what he is going to do, so we all move out of the way, then like Cato from The Pink Panther films, he whizzes right past and his battle cry of "Hyah!" goes to a scream of "Fuck!" as he smashes into the plate glass window of the fish 'n' chip shop, it's over in seconds.

There are massive loud screams from women and children and yelps from the men as Thomas crashes through, landing on a table, glass flies out everywhere, we all cover our faces. For about a second or two it seemed like the whole world had stopped, as we all exchange glances between the customers and us. We look over and Dennis is slowly picking himself up, but he doesn't look like he's up for a fight, then Thomas moves, oh good, he's not dead, but hurt. We hear him groan as he places both feet from the table onto the floor, he sits up straight brushing off the broken glass. He stands up straight but then starts to wobble, he has a few cuts round the face, nothing bad, he looks at us, but nothing, no threats or even fear, just looks at us in disbelief, then he collapses, as he does so we hear the police sirens. "Leggit" shouts Vinnie; I really don't think he needs to ask. We all start to run up Bridge Street towards the town centre, as we are running about eight to ten of the Merry Mod gang led by Rick and Tom are heading towards us. Someone must have said we were heading towards the fish and chip shop, but I don't really have the time to think about that now.

"Old Bill" yells Mint as we run towards them. Now this has got nothing to do them, they could have quite easily carried on going about their business, but no, they decide to join us and start running with us in the direction of the town centre, Mods stick together, as Snowy once told us. I hear, well we all hear, the slamming of car doors, I look over my shoulder as do many of the others and see four coppers get out of two panda cars, blocking all one way traffic in Bridge Street, thinking it's better to catch us on foot but we know all the nooks and crannies of the town.

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## **Chapter XI - Leave it Out**

Here I am in Carnaby Street, don't know how I came to be here, but it felt like instinct, Harold and Pauline are somewhere or other, but we've agreed to meet at Bar Italia in about an hour. Forgotten I've been there before with my father, he used to work in Covent Garden and took me there. I see all these Mods, I feel drawn to them, like I should be with them. I look at Susie dressed in a nice pink summer dress with a beret so lovely, she looks at me and sweetly smiles. I love her so much, yet I do miss being here with Tom, Rick and Vinnie. "I'll back in a minute luv, just wait here, I am going to look at something." She kisses my cheek and walks off, I turn and face a shop window, I see my reflection, I am a normal teenager, but I don't like it, it's not me, I want to be different, fight authority, find solace with Weller, I am lost in my own world, then there's a tap on my shoulder, it's Susie holding a Shelley's bag, I open it, it's those black Chelsea boots I have been after.

"You're a Mod luv. I love your passion for it, don't change, I might not be here forever, but you can't change your passion". Tears roll down my cheeks, I smile and head towards Robot. Ten minutes later I am standing in front of the same shop window, this time in a white and cream paisley shirt, light blue hipster trousers and my new Chelsea boots, the clothes I wore are now in the bin.

I am reborn, I am a Mod again. I take Susie's beret lightly off her head and put it on mine. "Sweetie, can I borrow your eyeliner?" She shakes her head and giggles as she always does and passes it to me, I outline my eyes, thick, really thick, I step back and check myself once again. The blood rushes through my veins, my heart is pumping, this what I am. I am a Mod, a true Mod, I lost my way for three fucking weeks, but maybe I needed to step out to see where I belong.

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Just Don't Get Caught!

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