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The unpublished John Lennon interview Maurice Hindle conducted on December 2nd, 1968 at Lennon's Kenwood home is truly an important historical document as it one of the most revealing interviews where Lennon conveys his most inner thoughts and feelings, something he had not really done up to that point. After the breakup of the Beatles, Lennon actively gave interviews speaking his mind, but Hindle's fascinating, in-depth and open interview was done at a time when, in Lennon's mind, he was still very much a Beatle.

It had only been two and a half years earlier that Lennon had tried to speak openly to the press, when in a March 1966 interview with Maureen Cleave on the lifestyles of the four Beatles, Lennon remarked "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that; I'm right and I'll be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first—rock n' roll or Christianity. Jesus was all right but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It's them twisting it that ruins it for me." When published in the *London Evening Standard* in the UK, the article and Lennon's remark didn't provoke any public reaction. It wasn't until five months later in August of '66 that the US teen magazine *Datebook* took Lennon's quote out of context positioning Lennon as saying that the Beatles had become more popular than Jesus. The remark created a massive uproar in the US specifically in the southern bible belt States where even the Ku Klux Klan got involved protesting the Beatles, holding anti-Beatle demonstrations banning their music and holding record-burning rallies. This negative publicity landed just as the Beatles were to start another US Tour on August 12th, 1966. The backlash, demonstrations and death threats forced Brian Epstein, the group's manager, to even consider canceling the tour altogether. At a Chicago press conference on August 11th, Lennon had to basically apologize for his remarks, but he also defended the fact that the quote was taken out of context. The experience must have been humiliating. It's no wonder that by the end of the tour the Beatles had announced that their performance on August 29th at San Francisco's Candlestick Park would be their last.

Negative publicity, record burning and death threats; all because he was speaking his views honestly and openly to the press? One can see why Lennon would want to distance himself from the whole ordeal. He found some solace for the remainder of '66 in Spain where he filmed "How I Won The War". It was during that time in Spain that Lennon was able to retreat from the press. It seems from that point on that Lennon had not really done any more major interviews where he would ever again be so open. The better part of 1967 saw Lennon and the Beatles hidden deep in the studio, producing their masterpiece, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and then the latter part of '67 working on their next psychedelic trip, *Magical Mystery Tour*. Again, Lennon did no major interviews revealing his inner thoughts.

By the beginning of 1968 the Beatles were off to Rishikesh, India to study Transcendental Meditation at the ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Again Lennon was far away from the press. Upon their return, the Beatles once again entered the studio to record their double album, which would become known as the 'The White Album'. The Beatles, their close inner circle of people and confidants kept the outside world out and kept the press at a distance only letting them know what was needed. It was during these recording sessions that Lennon introduced his new soul mate Yoko Ono to the inner circle. Perhaps it was because of their new strong partnership and Yoko's support that Lennon once again started to open up.

The Beatles 'White Album' was released on November 22nd 1968 and just 10 days later the young Maurice Hindle was at Lennon's home interviewing and recording this fascinating interview. When listening to the interview you really get a sense that John Lennon was once again ready to speak his mind, and he did! He speaks and gives his views on a wide range of topics. From politics to religion, people, art, music and most interestingly the Beatles. When he speaks about the Beatles it's very much his band and something that he is proud of, but yet he looks at the group in stages. Interestingly, he refers to the earlier years as the 'Mop Tops' saying, "Oh, that was the most miserable time of our lives, was the mop top, MBE, cop-out period. It was torture. And that's why I dropped touring. I just wasn't even a physical fact. It was the thing we were put through to get that, what we earned."

Later he equated the Beatles to being on a trip, "Yeah, I think the world is on a trip, you know, and like, on record. I must relate to our records, because that's the thing I've done most. On records we went through the childish, tribal bit, which is the early records. Self-conscious bit, which is *Rubber Soul*, say pre-*Pepper*, coming out of *Pepper*. And now on self-consciousness I think, y'know as much self-consciousness as you can get, relatively speaking, I think as humans as what we're doing we've been a bit, the tribal bit, childlike. And now we're suddenly becoming aware of something and becoming self-conscious and going through all the hassles you go through in self-conscious where you're so self-conscious you can't do anything. And then to come out of that is the next stage which I think we're going into, is being self-conscious but realizing you can handle it, you know?"

It's fascinating to hear how optimistic Lennon is about the Beatles. When asked about his fans and the Beatles' fan club, Lennon is positive and even plays Hindle the latest Beatles' fan club Christmas record. Speaking of the Beatles' future, Lennon explains "I think we're going to do... we might make a live album next... around January. And then we just let whoever gets there in free properly. It'll just be that. And we'll still probably do a tour of the States free with charity... and they're already saying I'm an old age pensioner with fifty-stone legs and the elephant died and he was a musician. It gets into to all that."

After listening to the entire interview, then taking a step back, you truly get a snapshot of what a man was thinking, it was a day in the life of John Lennon, December 2nd, 1968.

- Andy Babiuk, January, 2014