



The Smashing Pumpkins

Thru the Eyes of Billy

There is a Dennis Potter quote pinned to my wall which reads: "I am not blessed with great patience, so fuck off." Never is this more relevant than when I'm working towards a deadline; doubly so when that deadline is for the questions I'll use in an interview with the likes of, in this case, the Smashing Pumpkins. Hence, when my phone rings two hours before the earliest time I am expecting chief Pumpkin Billy Corgan to call, I snatch it in frustration and snap: Hello!

"Hi, is that Bronwyn?"

Crikey, that voice sounds familiar! Yes, it is.

"It's Billy here."

He doesn't have to elaborate, as I've had only one Billy on my mind this morning. Besides, his voice is as unmistakable when spoken as it is when sung. It's the voice a generation of displaced youth recognised as their own. First I snapped at it, and now I have to keep it waiting while I do a mad scamper to collect my thoughts, my dictaphone and my questions. My fluster is compounded when, much to my horror, Billy is determined to get

the first couple of questions in.

"Do you have to be on the speaker phone?," he asks.

Yeah, I do.

"It sounds really nasty."

Gee, thanks. I'm sorry about that.

"It's okay."

Phew. I attempt valiantly to take control of the interview.

How long have you been out of the studio since recording the new album?

"Um, about three weeks, or four weeks. Can I ask you one [more] question though?"

Oh no. Sure.

"What time did they tell you I was gonna call?"

Between 12.30 and 2.30, which is about two hours away. It's 10.30 here now.

"Hey, I really apologise, 'cause they gave me the wrong time."

Phew, mark two — the ice cap is softening! Now is the time to get this thing on track once and for all.