

Pick A Dub

As the man K.Hudson say:

**he's moving in your
neighbourhood, like you know a
brother really should,
so be good,
brother, be good...
so listen to the man K.Hudson
passin' through your neighbourhood**
Dennis Alcapone 1970 - 'Spanish Omega'

Remembering Keith Hudson

One day towards the end of 1969, the deejay Dennis Alcapone was in his yard on Brotherton Avenue, off the Waltham Park Road and Spanish Town Road in Kingston.

"I was sittin' on my wall, me an' mi bredrin dem, girl-watchin' and reasonin', when a bredda ride up 'pon a Honda 50 motorbike. 'Im say: "My name is Keith Hudson, record producer" an' 'im call I. Me jump off a wall and go reason with 'im. 'Im say 'im want me do two tune fe 'im. 'Im seh 'im do this tune with U.Roy, name *Dynamic Fashion Way*, and me tell 'im me 'ave the tune. A wicked tune-me use to play it 'pon the sound. It never get no radio play, ca' it was a underworld tune. The deejay business never really bust out yet. 'Im tell me I mus' come check 'im at the shop-'im 'ave a lickle shop name 'Imbidimts', down a Parade-an' we can go a studio tomorrow and record the tune dem. So me feel well excited now, ca' me never record no tune yet. We went to studio, an' do the *Maca Version*. Keith was a very creative person-I remember when we did *Spanish Omega*, we did that up by Randy's studio-Keith said to the engineer Errol Thompson that we want to do an intro on the tune. Start the tune, stop and start it again, 'im explain that bit to E.T. At the time it was new, so that's how we had the introduction with *Spanish Omega*. He was always thinkin' of new things yunno. That record, *Maca Version*, he pressed that up _rst on what we use to call a test press-they use to give you three or six copies, a test press on a white label. We take those round to the shops to get orders. So we went up Orange Street, I an' Keith Hudson, up by Clancy Eccles' shop. The girl who was working there ask Keith who is that on the record. Keith say: "It's just a lickle youth", an' she smile. Keith didn't make her any the wiser, even tho' me an' 'im was both dere. She order a box, twenty-_ve, of the tune. We move on from there to Beverleys shop. From there on is 'nuff move me an' 'im mek, till we _nally reach back down by Randy's. But Keith was a nice brother; when the record start sellin' now, 'im say: "Bwoy, Dennis, yu 'ave to get yourself together, businesswise. Mek we go down a King Street and buy a wicked tuxedo outfit fi wear 'pon stage."

So me an' 'im go down to La Parisienne on King Street, an' buy some pants length, an' 'im carry me to 'im tailor, and 'im mek me a wicked outfit. Then Keith ask me if me 'ave a bank account, an' me tell 'im no. 'Im say: "Yu 'ave to 'ave a bank account, yout".

'Im carry me out a 'im bank, out a Three Mile, Bank of Nova Scotia, and mek me open an account.'Im is a nice bredda who try 'im bes' to point you in a right direction. 'Im like you big 'im up still, when you do the record, ca' 'im was a handsome bredda, a girls man, so 'im like it when you boost 'im. If yu notice 'im even put 'im face 'pon 'im record label. 'Im was a dentist-'im use to do cappin' and fillin'. He was a very ambitious youth right from dem times deh. 'Im tell me 'im was gonna build a studio in a 'im yard. Unfortunately, he got 'imself involved with some Mall Road men-he was livin' round the Bay Farm Road area 'imself, and dem attack 'im house.

He stayed away a while from 'im yard, 'im kinda lie low for a while; he stayed downtown. After the heat cool off, one day me an' 'im go up by 'im house. All we see was a couple of walls of the house, still standin'. Dem man mash it up. Keith was really upset about it, but 'im jus' decide to pick 'imself up and start all over again. Then 'im an' a bredda name Stamma start spar together. He was buildin' a good reputation as producer in the business. After the situation with the Mall Road men, he went into the studio and made *Riot* with the Soul Syndicate, and then made *S.90 Skank* with Big Youth, an' that record bust Jah Yout' out. Keith said to me 'Yu see it, Dennis: who God bless, no man curse". All in all, 'im was a nice guy, an' 'im always try to show you the right way. Like any man, 'im 'ave 'im enemies, but so it go. You can't beat dem all.

Later, after 'im join up with Virgin, me an' 'im link up. This was in the late seventies.

One day I was in Green Street, Upton Park. All of a sudden, I heard someone call out "Dennis Alcapone !". A car pull up. When me go towards the car, it was Keith Hudson, Tappa Zukie and Militant Barry Keith say "Whap'n ?"

Me say: "Wha' unnu doin' in my area ?"

Dem seh dem deh 'pon some business. Anyway, we a reason an' 'im give me 'im hotel number an' ting, an' nex' day me go check 'im in a 'im hotel. When me reach, 'im ask me if me want to drink something. 'Im is the firs' man weh introduce Harvey's Bristol Cream to me! So we reason for a while, an' 'im tell me about the project 'im a work 'pon with Virgin. He played me some tunes with a girl singing harmony. Anyway, 'im did leave an' go back a the States, an' me kind lose touch with him a way. One night me listen to Rodigan's show 'pon Capital, an' that's how me find out that Keith had passed away. I didn't even know he was sick. 'Nuff respect to 'im, and 'im works will live on."

Dennis Alcapone May 26th 1994

Keith Hudson was a powerful creator of Jamaican music.

Although reputedly producing his first recording at the age of 14 around 1960/61, Hudson started his Imbidimts label in 1967, financing it with his earnings as a dentist. He scored with his first release, *Old Fashioned Way* by the great singer Ken Boothe. By 1970 he had further hits with two more classic vocalists, Delroy Wilson's *Run Run* and John Holt's *Never Will I Hurt My Baby*. That same year saw him produce U.Roy's *Dynamic Fashion Way*, a record that has some claim to being the first truly modern Jamaican deejay record. When U.Roy moved to Duke Reid's Treasure Isle label for his epochal series of hitmaking toasts, Hudson wasted no time in finding a replacement in Dennis Alcapone, then toasting on the El Paso set with Lizzy and Samuel the First. Alcapone in turn made a series of records for Hudson that remain amongst his best recordings. Through the early 'seventies he produced music by such as Alton Ellis, Augustus Pablo, Big Youth, Delroy Wilson, Horace Andy, U.Roy and Soul Syndicate.

In 1974 he began to issue albums featuring his inimitable vocals; sets like *Entering The Dragon* (1974), the critically acclaimed *Flesh Of My Skin* (1974), and *Torch Of Freedom* (1975) convey a unique vision and militant consciousness, and were enough to convince Virgin Records to sign him in 1976.

Always an innovator, he was one of the first Jamaican producers to issue a dub album; *Pick A Dub* was a big seller in the reggae market during the winter of 1974-75. It's not difficult to see why; it features some of the producer's hardest rhythms, played by bassist Aston 'Family Man' Barrett, his late brother, drummer Carlton Barrett (both then with Bob Marley and the Wailers) and members of Soul Syndicate. Included are cuts to hits like Big Youth's *S.90 Skank* (*Pick A Dub* itself), and Hudson's recuts of classic rhythms like *Declaration Of Rights* (*Black Right*) and *Satta Massa Gana* (*Satia*) that easily rival the originals for power. Eschewing gimmickry like the sound effects-dogs barking, clocks chiming and so on-that would feature on later dub albums, *Pick A Dub* focuses uncompromisingly on the bass and drums, the occasional echoed vocals of such as Horace Andy and Hudson himself serving to throw the rhythms into sharp relief.

Hudson moved to New York in 1976 and went on to make a series of albums up to 1982, including the excellent *Rasta Communication* (1978) and its companion dub set *Brand* (1977). In August 1984 he was discovered to have lung cancer; although he underwent radiation treatment on the 14th November that year he died. He was only 38 years old. His reputation as a progressive, innovative Jamaican producer is assured.

Steve Barrow 1994