

# What's All This Menu Malarkey?

**J**ust not taking yourself seriously, that's what Menu's all about. Some DJs see themselves as rock stars and superstars, not just in breaks but in all dance music, and the fun aspect of why you DJ to a floor full of people has been lost over the last few years."

## Terry / Atomic Hooligan

**A**s you're reading this article it's safe to say, you're musically educated. So I'm thinking you've heard the word 'Menu' on your travels. Not the sort that gets this spat at you: "HA! THIS LASS WANTS A MENU! ooooooh!" when you ask to see the selection at the kebab shop. No, a different kind of menu. Actually this menu has many guises all masked by Jay Cunning, Terry Ryan and Matt Welch from Atomic Hooligan. Trust them to have a dressing up box.

Anyone who's heard the radio show (on Breaks FM and now on Ministry of Sound) knows that it's probably more amusing to let the boys speak for themselves! Well with these strings to their bow from Breakspoll they are in an excitable mood: The Hooligans were crowned with 'Best Album', 'Menu Sessions' radio came second only to Annie Nightingale and Breaks FM won 'Best Radio Station'. Terry Hooligan was above, hallowed by thy name the Plumps in 'Best DJ', Menu- the label was nominated 'Best Breakthrough label', Dopamine, the latest signing won 'Best Single' for 'Hold You' and was nominated 'Best Breakthrough Producer' plus The Cunning one/Hooliganesq 'Beatz and Bobz' was the world's sixth favourite compilation. When I went to school that was cue for a party!

**Mof:** "Where did this Cunning/Hooligan rapport kick off?"  
**Jay:** "It started off at 'Collision' the weekly night run by Botchit and Mechanoise at Madame Jo Jo's in 2000. I played down there a bit so did Terry and we just ended up always being the last at the bar, throwing Stella down our necks and yeah, boy from Watford, boy from Harrow, it all just clicked."

**Terry:** "It was Chemistry!"

**Mof:** "What were your first impressions?"

**Terry:** "I thought Jay was a very intuitive, spiritual young man."

**S**ome DJ's play and look as if they've been slapped with a wet fish not making any expression throughout the whole set. But when people listen to the show or hear us out live it really translates the fun we are having with the music."

## Jay Cunning / Menu Music

**Jay:** "I thought Terry had some good self-improvement points. Bodily odour was one; his rudeness came across as hilarious but managed to offend absolutely everyone else..."

**Terry:** "Terry the Truth speaker..."

**Jay:** "That's a nice bucktooth you've got there!"

**Terry:** "Breaking the Christmas shirts out early are we?" (Raucous laughter)

**Jay:** "I think it was a joint love of taking the micky out of people and once we had practised enough and realised we couldn't outwit each other we just joined forces!"

**Mof:** "Just to completely rewind and put in the groundwork for our reader, Jay when did music demand to be in your life?"

**Jay:** "I was listening to pirate radio at about 14 and then it came partly through a passion for the music and partly frustration to see big name DJ's who couldn't mix for soup. That was an incentive. I actually learned to mix in New Zealand without a pair of decks."

**Terry:** "Course you did!"

**Jay:** "No true story, we had two sound forges and used to just do spin backs before. It was only when I went to NZ and spent the year listening to mix tapes I realised "Oh that's what you're meant to do" and when I came back I could mix!"

**Mof:** "What about you Terry?"

**Terry:** "I as a teenager was a hip-hop addict. So I went out doing graffiti really badly and break-dancing really, really badly. There were four elements and I failed miserably at three so far but I really wanted to be in a hip-hop group. A couple of mates were rappers and I tried writing..."

**Jay:** "Give us one of them."

**Terry:** "My friend Jay's a tosser (laugh). No can't think of any!"

**Jay:** "So I got myself two un-pitchable turntables and a microphone mixer and started making mix tapes, getting two records the same and started looping beats together. Then I

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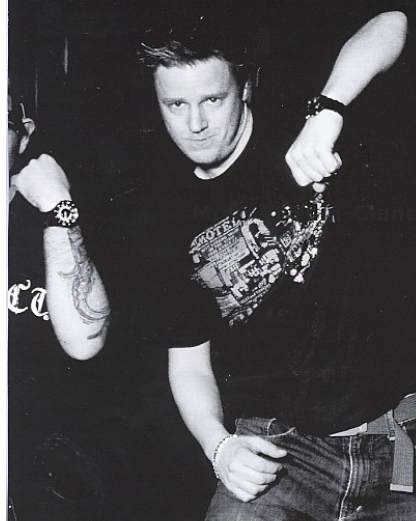
**WORDS BY:**

**KATIE REDDIN-CLANCY**

got my first set of turntables and learnt how to scratch. I started entering DJ battles, won a few and lost quite a few so realised that wasn't the way to go. So yeah started DJing down my student union playing hip-hop and RnB, not very credible thing to say but they paid me good money when I was at college!

**Jay:** "Mate, I played garage!" (Laughter)

# menu



**Terry:** "So from there met up with Matt and another guy who was in Atomic Hooligan then called Deacon as they needed a scratch DJ for their live show. I then began production with Matt. That's why I'm in the clubs nowadays coz of Atomic Hooligan. The first few breaks gigs I got employed to do through Botchit, I didn't have any breaks records! So I went along with the whole back catalogue of

Botchit, which is not that clubby, breaky music and loads of hip-hop records and Drum & Bass! So that's how my style developed, coz obviously in a set I'll switch between them, pure accident!"

**Mof:** "And how did Matt start?"

**Terry:** "Matt's a classically trained musician and he kind of rebelled against classical music and found the music he really loved in rave and later on in Leftfield and Chemical Brothers etc. He's never been a DJ as such but he doesn't need to be, he's a studio genius."

**Jay:** "Respect!"

**Mof:** "What would you be doing if you weren't doing music?"

**Terry:** "Most people say, 'Yeah I'd be in jail!' but I wouldn't be as I'm a good boy! I'd probably be on the other side, selling music, that's what I did before in record shops and as a buyer for a CD chain."

**Mof:** "Jay, how do you juggle everything with your work commitments?"

**Jay:** (Growling) with the real job! Yeah pretty tough. I work for a TV company..."

**Mof:** "What's your official title?"

**Jay:** "Technical director. The stuff that I do is fairly flexible in hours but there's a lot of interest there too. I do everything else in the evenings and the weekends and then I normally get to see my girlfriend and her son Jack (who occasionally raps on the Menu Show!) who I live with, for about an hour a month! The trouble is I got to the point a couple of years ago when I was getting involved in promoting Global Beats, Breaks FM, Andy C's Ram label and night, DJing, trying to do production, girlfriend, so I had to streamline a lot of stuff..."

**Terry:** "Streamline!"

**Jay:** "Buzz words, how to think outside the box and streamline that angle!"

**Terry:** "Do you work for an American company perhaps?"

**Jay:** "Yeeeeeah! Now I've just got to focus, still DJing but it's all about the label. I've got close friends and my girlfriend around me who help me out and are very understanding!"

**Mof:** "How did you get involved in Breaks FM?"

**Jay:** "I used to go into a record shop called Carbon in Kensington and they had flyers for a party by Breaks FM. I thought I'd phone them as they had people like Danny Mac and Freq Nasty playing pretty regularly on 103.2 FM. So I woke up Alex (Sonz of Mecha) early on a Sunday morning being all Captain Keeny that I was. Anyway, had a really good chat and he said, 'send us a mix', which I did and ended up doing sat 4-6pm for a year. However, I lived in Ealing so could never pick it up- I didn't know if they actually played them! From there they stopped the FM as were focussing on their Mechanoise label but then later decided to start on the internet. They approached me to get involved and I basically

came in as partnership and set up the whole of the Internet station with Alex and Jody. We got the whole thing working, organised the guests and then obviously I got more involved in the Menu Show that is coming up to four years old!"

**Mof:** "What made you embrace Hooliganism?"

**Jay:** "Just the infectious love he provides! I think personally we get on very well, got the same sick sense of humour that no-one else gets and just the same sort of love of the music. We became good friends as well as enjoying the music..."

**Terry:** "I'm starting to fill up here!"

**Jay:** "This is your wedding speech mate!"

**Terry:** "We first started the radio thang on Groovetech, which was the beginning of Menu- Thank God for Groovetech!"

**Mof:** "So what does the Menu Sessions show stand for?"

**Terry:** "Carnage."

**Jay:** "Yeah, everything that we do with Menu just embraces partying."

**Terry:** "Just not taking your self seriously, that's what Menu's all about. Some DJ's see themselves as rock stars and superstars, not just in breaks in all dance music, and the fun aspect of why you DJ to a floor full of people has been lost over the last few years. We love making people dance and smile and have a good time. None of its brain surgery we just love what we do and want to give that to everyone else."

**Jay:** "I think it's well received as some DJ's play and look as if they've been slapped with a wet fish not making any expression throughout the whole set. But when people listen to the show or hear us out live it really translates the fun we are having with the music. And it's genuine, we're never stressing before saying, 'Right this has got to be a real flash show!' We're half cut before we get on the decks, always drinking on the radio show and having a laugh!"

The Menu Sessions Radio show has just been given a weekly Monday 8-10pm slot on Ministry of Sound Radio, with its original Thursday 7-9pm on Breaks.fm.com.

**Mof:** "How many downloads do you get per radio show?"

**Jay:** "500 kergillion! Up until January last year we were averaging 2/3000 per month. But then we got nominated for Best Radio station last Breakspoll! They've split it this year for Best station and Best show which is good. But then it went up to 70,000 and peaked in May at 130,000 and now it averages at about 50,000 a month. But a massive percentage of our listeners download the shows from the archive- I mean there's a tremendous choice! They can listen at their own leisure. We get all the nerdy stats..."

**Terry:** "No Jay gets all the nerdy stats."

been amazing!"

**Terry:** "Awesome triplets, very funky. Sonia's been label manager for Botchit & Scarper, my mother label for 8



years and now I'm hers!"

**Jay:** "So we're going to have a Rico rerub for that which will be a spanking 12."

**Mofa:** "So that's Menu 4 and 5 is Majool 'Buenos Aires' and Rico Tubbs Ghetto Soul."

**Jay:** "Yup, We've actually got up to ten. Ones we are really looking forward to are Dopamine and Dr Benwahh's 'Kiss my break' and Jay Stewarts 'Don't Do It'. I'm going to massively regret saying this but last year we had three releases and were finding our feet. Now we really want to get our arses in gear and get a good amount of releases out."

In fact you are invited to a tasting of some Menu releases on Jay and Terry's 'Beatz & Bobz 5' compilation they did for Functional's 8<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. As you know this label and club night with its head honcho, Biff is behind the UK's most important festivals: Glastonbury and The Glade. So give generously, music is not just for rollicking around to with your pint, wristbands and wellies it's for life!

**Mofa:** "Terry, when are the Hooligans going to release on Menu?"

**Terry:** "Well we are road testing a couple of bits, one's called 'Boom Boom'. We want our real tiptop destroyer for Menu like 'Just one More'. I'm also planning to do a mix compilation for Menu, later this year. There's going to be a big involvement with Atomic Hooligan on Menu in 2006, looking forward to it."

**Mofa:** "The Menu and West Records Party at 333 kicked off when's the next one?"

**Jay:** "We did Breakfish and have got the Eden Collective at Ministry lined up and Def Inc's free party at C64, May 19<sup>th</sup> - that party is what it's all about. I played the one before you at Clockwork, hilarious, third Friday of the month I think. Oh what a good opportunity to check them out on our radio feature section of the site- How organised some people!!! Heheh!"

**Terry:** "Yeah I was a surprise guest at the one after the white scary mask. Did you see they were in the top 10 best parties in the world with no press, publicity, nothing, just quality word of mouth."

**Jay:** "Menu dishes the dirtiest! Yeah I saw that in Breakspot's colour coded charts, Like 'em!"

**Terry:** "And that 'Phat Admirer' tune we played on the show has just been nabbed by Botchit."

**Jay:** "Yes Terry, what do you want a medal for your knowledge?"

**Terry:** "Obviously, to add to my collection!"

**Jay:** "Back to Katie's question; we've also got plans in Manchester at Tangled, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Romania and Finland. We're basically looking at a Menu takeover of people's nights with all our artists!"

So what's been the reception to Menu 's six decks and FX show?

Ben Edwards (DJ Mag Journalist) Glade Festival 2004

"Atomic Hooligan, Jay Cunnning & Xander absolutely tore up the Breaksday tent with arguably the set of the festival."

UFO (TMBASE Organiser) - Romania

"Wonderful selection, sharp mixes, excellent party attitude...back in 2002 when we first invited him Jay was virtually unknown in Romania, but he rocked the TMBASE Festivals like a hurricane and now he is a national Breakbeat hero. Together with the Atomic Hooligan gave us the most entertaining Breakbeat live gig I've seen in my life."

Waks (In Beast We Trust Promoter) Tunnel Club, Russia

(Menu Residency)

"In Russia there are known DJ's such as Tiesto, Paul Oakenfold and so on, but somebody did not give out such a show as Menu did."

Obviously I can't write about these kids without delving into the Hooligans antics and what a lot of paint is going to be thrown at the wall this year.

**Terry:** "Well Katie! We're recording our second album, looking for some more vocalists. We just recorded a great new track with Justine from 'Seven 10 Split' and 'Spitball' off 'You Are Here'. Yeah it's tasty; 145bpm drum & bassy style, nice little hook."

**Jay:** "Nice!"

**Terry:** "She's written a couple of awesome tracks. Justine is the epitome of a stage performer. She is one of the nicest people. If you ever go on tour Justine is the perfect person, very loving, giving, spiritual, the mother of the band but on stage she's a fire nutcase. She holds the crowd in her hand until she's ready to throw them away!"

**Mofa:** "You are Here crossed so many genre's which particular route are you going with the new album?"

**Terry:** "I'm very influenced by techno at the mo, but it's just all about getting the grooves down. We are looking for a hip-hop vocalist. Jay's pointing to himself, imagine that!"

**Mofa:** "So when's the new album due?"

**Terry:** "So that'll be March 2006, as the last was March 2005 but we're going to put a mix CD on Menu in the meantime with new Hooligans stuff. Also planning to do a 'You are Here' remix album as we've got 15 remixes that have never seen the light of day."

**Mofa:** "From the likes of who?"

**Terry:** "Blim, Ills, Jay and Pod's, Lee Coomes, Aquasky, Smithmonger, loads of them. So they'll be lots on the shelves from Atomic Hooligan. We've also got a private little project that I have to keep very under wraps. Plus I'm doing a compilation for my label in Japan, 'Village Again'."

I have to say it can be a 'challenge Annika' getting straight answers out of these kids as the banter trips you up constantly. But the thing that has always stuck me is that these boys have huge hearts. And that's the truth and the expose all rolled up, decoded and hidden in the mini crème egg gunk. For Menu-Art for Art's sake- stems from humour and music and that is pure, unadulterated, infectious entertainment that makes Dale Winton wimper. You can of course keep tabs on all concoctions on the Menu; artists, radio shows and releases on [www.menumusic.com](http://www.menumusic.com). What a lot these boys pile on their plate but trust me you can only salivate with all that's on this Menu. Watch the dribble though, never a good look! Menu, this is (just the beginning of) your life!