Acknowledgements

If I was to make this an extensive list of the people I owe gratitude to, this acknowledgements section would go on for as long as the book. I am fortunate to have found my life graced by so many great people that to try and name them all will undoubtedly mean a person will get left off, so I will keep this minimal.

To the contributors, those who appear and those whose interviews had to be cut for various reasons. This book would not exist without you. The majority of the people I spoke with I didn’t know beforehand and, in spite of this, each person was incredibly open with their experiences of living in Manchester, with honesty and humour, often opening up different lines of thinking and linking me up with other people who could speak on other issues. I was adamant from the start that this would be OUR story and not just my interpretation of the time and events. I am so grateful for your time and allowing me to share parts of your life within these pages. Thank you.

To my closest friends. We do not see each other half as much as we should, as life has thrown us to the wind, but I am proud of you to a person for what you have become, especially knowing the hurdles that each of you faced along your journeys. Joseph Conrad said that ‘you can judge a man’s worth by his friends’. I have but a small circle, yet within it are the most supportive and sarcastic
humans with questionable dress sense to walk the earth. I wouldn’t change a thing about any of you (outside the ones that support Liverpool). I don’t tell you dickheads enough, I love you.

**To my parents.** Where do I start, YOU are where I begin. I admire you both so much. All I ever wanted was to live a life to make you proud of me. To demonstrate that the hard work you both went through to raise me, Cameron, and Kelly was worth it. I wasn’t the easiest of sons, a lad with his head in the clouds and an eye for adventure. I know I’ve put you through worry and heartache over the course of the past few decades, but through it all I know there has always been an invisible umbilical cord that I could pull on for safety. As Dad always says, Family Comes First; you have both shown that throughout my life. I would never take for granted what you have done for me. Thank you for everything.

**To my sister and brother.** You pair do my head right in. I am the eldest, yet it is you two that have your shit together. I’m glad you didn’t follow my lead. Cameron, you have become the man I wanted to be. I can still see you in your Moses basket as a baby and me being gutted to have to share a room just at the age I might be bringing girls around. I see you jumping on my bed as a seven-year-old singing Oasis songs when I was hungover, and I see you now as one of the wisest, funniest, most carefree people that I look up to. You have become a great man, Meathead. Kelly, you were a massive pain in my arse. There was no age between us growing up and so what I experienced you did likewise, from running through Towyn Caravan Parks, to doing all-nighters in forests in Mossley. We drank, smoked, laughed, and fought together through our teen years. I never told you when we were kids, as siblings often won’t, but you were, and are, the best of friends. You are an incredible mother. Smell, you have a heart of gold.
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Niala. From my heart, thank you for having me as partner with you for half a lifetime and sharing the most memorable experiences, which I will always look back on in awe and love. Perhaps it is Just a Ride, but over the course of the rollercoaster we both know the highs outweighed the lows by at least seventeen to one. I am eternally indebted to you, for more than you think, and most of all for bringing me the three most beautiful gifts a man could ever want. There will never be anything but love.

To my daughters. My Angels with Mucky Faces, Snotty Noses and Untied Laces, my girls … You three are my purpose for walking this planet, you are the meaning of my life, you give me a reason to exist. You allow me into your world to see things through your eyes and I love getting lost in your imagination alongside you. Please remember to never allow life to put a ceiling above what you want to do in it, don’t colour in between the lines that others draw for you. Your hearts and spirits will take you to places way beyond the clouds. You are a trio of smart, caring, inquisitive, beautiful tour de forces and I pinch myself all the time to say I had any part in bringing you here. Being your Daddy is an honour and I promise to stop at nothing to make sure that I can be one that you deserve and need. It is beyond love what I have for you, Maya, Roma, and Esme.

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To Natalie Rees and Clint Boon. Had it not been for you asking me on the podcast then none of this would have materialised, as Chris (above) wouldn’t have heard our interview. I figure
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I owe you at least a night out to say thank you (or half a pint to share, depending on sales).

Lastly, to the young lad that I hadn’t seen or thought about for decades. To meet you again on this journey has opened my eyes to things I’d tried my best to forget. Writing this book has brought a lot to the front of my mind, to the extent that reliving certain events resulted in a relapse in PTSD. I found an old photograph of Us towards finishing this book and it was like I was right back there with you; the pain, fear and isolation we experienced in our youth began to haunt me again, the way it did for too long when we were just a kid. It seems we hadn’t exorcised our demons, but hidden them in a time capsule. When we opened it this past couple of years the ghosts ran amok. You went through a lot of trauma that you didn’t need to, mate. It is only Us that know the depths to which your heart and head have sunk to, how lonely life was, why you wanted to escape, and what it was you were running from. There are some secrets we will never share but I know that us holding onto the nightmare gives it its power. Maybe I had to reopen the wound for us to really heal, maybe, but enough damage has been done now, David, what’s gone has gone. As these pages make their way into the world, my only hope is that we find a peace to live in the present, and not continue to drown ourselves in something which we had no control over in our past.

You did alright, man! You did alright.

Scotty