

An exclusive Kevin & Bean Archive interview with Kevin Ryder (8/17/2021)

So, Kevin Ryder, 2-time Radio Hall of Famer, a lot has changed since our 2013 interview (http://www.kevinandbeanarchive.com/Kevin_Ryder_interview.pdf). Let's address the sad and the ugly items first. Tell us what you recall and how you felt with Lisa May and Doc being fired in February, 2015; Ralph Garman being abruptly let go in November, 2017; and finally, Bean announcing his November 2019 departure back in early March, 2019. (use as much or as little space as you need).

Wow. Let's start with the most painful! Great choice! Lisa's firing was handled SO unbelievably cruelly, and the hardest part was that we had no choice how they handled it, and legally we weren't able to comment. It's one of the few things that still hurts my heart to this day. But she should've known her gambling habit would finally catch up to her. Just kidding about the gambling thing.

Ralph was similar to Lisa. It was incredibly cruel. We had no control over how it happened, and legally we couldn't discuss. Honestly? He should've done less blow. Just kidding about the blow thing.

Bean had been talking a lot about leaving behind the scenes, and left on his terms, so there was no regret there. I was nervous to do the show without him. That's when I started Meth.

(Curious there was no disclaimer about the meth). Tell us how the plan to move on after Bean left came together. How much support did you have, if any, from the company, for carrying on with a new show name and a smaller cast?

I talked to the company at length, and they assured me they'd give us time to make it work. I told them I understood if they wanted to start something new, and I'd just retire if they were finished with us. They assured me they were all in. And by "all in" they meant 2 and 1/2 months.

Did you feel like things ever got a chance to click with the Kevin In The Morning team? Were 55 shows not enough to get a flow going?

I think we were doing well. Allie is so talented, she could jump in whenever I couldn't use the English language in any meaningful way. But it's impossible to get used to a new chemistry without that weird guy in a few months.

Did you have any suspicion that the show would end so soon? How were the ratings for KITM? It seemed apparent that everyone was blind-sided.

For 30 years I was in every meeting with management. What happened? Why? Everything. They didn't consult me on this one though... So, I was a bit surprised. And by "a bit" I mean completely.

How long did it take to realize it was really over for the 30-year run? How did the others take getting dumped (over the phone, during a pandemic)?

It probably took me 6 months to get used to the idea. My DNA was in that station. Literally and figuratively. Over the phone during a pandemic was devastating. I knew Allie would be fine because she's so talented, but it's still a shitty way to treat people. But to fire all of our support staff? When nobody was hiring? I was livid. I love those peeps, and treating them like that was unforgivable. When I said goodbye March 18th, I was just planning on going quietly. But when I found out how they treated everyone else, I just couldn't keep silent.

How did people feel about Omar staying on with Stryker and Klein? Was Beermug retained or was he hired back later on?

Everybody was happy for Omar. He's the best, and he's the only one that got treated sort of okay. I called Mike (Program Director) the night after I got fired, and yelled at him about firing Beermug. As much as we made fun of him, he was good on the air, good in production, willing to do anything. I told him he was stupid for letting Beermug go. They rehired him the next day, but tried to get him to change his name from "beer mug" which he did for a couple of days. He's the best. His mom is questionable though.

Did you have or do you have any opinion on station management moving Stryker and Klein to mornings and how well that program worked (at least while Stryker was on board)?

My only thought on that, was that if the station pisses off the audience, and then immediately moves in someone else, those guys never got a real chance. I was pissed at the timing,

because Stryker and Klein had to take the hate of the listeners (or love) over us being fired. Gotta be honest, I didn't listen much. I didn't do anything at all before Noon for 12 months.

Whom do you keep in touch with and what are the others doing, at least those few who don't now have podcasts? (So, I guess Asst Producer Christine only)?

I keep in touch with everyone. Those people are my family. Christine has a job helping produce a TV show, and helps Mike Catherwood and I with our Great! News podcast. The King of Mexico is coming with me to a Galaxy game on Friday! [8/10/202] They really are family.

You were still under contract with Entercom through most of 2020 so we heard nothing from you. Were you bursting at the seams to talk about things?

Not really. That was a hard year for me. I put my effort into writing my book about my good times at KROQ. I said things every day for 30 years. Being quiet was good for me.

Most people know that you've been working on writing a book about your three-decade career at KR*Q. What inspired you to take on this project? When will it be finished? What can we expect to read about in it?

There are SO MANY behind the scenes stories that people don't know. Of course, it's impossible to summarize 30 years, but I take a long, detailed look at some of the bigger things in our career, and tell the behind the scenes stories. Also, the second half of it is a coloring book.

I'm 95% finished with it. It'll probably be out in the next few months. But never forget reading is for losers.

Other than writing the book, what did you do for the rest of 2020 while stuck at home?

Watched TV. Went on vacation. Oh wait. Couldn't go on vacation. Actually, my daughter moved in with me from NYC for about 3 months when that city was COVID central. That was absolutely the best! (For me.) You'd have to ask her for her side of that story. But she got me into reading. Books. Reading books. What?

You put in a nice plug for the annual Friends and Helpers backpack drive (<http://www.friendsandhelpers.org/>) last month on KLOS. What is your role in the charity nowadays? What's it like working with your ex-wife? I assume Melissa is still the heart and soul of the operation.

Melissa is still everything with the charity. I'm only the spokesmodel, so my role hasn't changed. But we decided early on that there were two things more important than us. Our kids, and the charity. So, we still work together on the charity a lot. That makes me happy. It's something we both agree on whole heartedly. And the charity hasn't suffered at all. It's stronger than ever, despite my best efforts :)

Great! News with Kevin and Mike. How did this podcast come to be? Is it still on hiatus, or did you call it quits after 49 episodes?

Just in the process of restarting it. It'll probably be in the next 2 or 3 weeks. That's something else I think is really important: reminding people there are still good people on this planet. I have had to block Mike's phone 3 times because of the texts I get from him. He's nasty. And a great friend. But mostly nasty.

So, 95.5 KLOS, Southern California's Rock Station- how did this gig come about? Did sending out cassette airchecks finally pay off or did they approach you?

Sluggo, who I've known longer than Bean, was working there when I got fired [from KR*Q]. He immediately texted me that I should go there. Honestly, I wasn't going to get back into radio again, but he convinced me it would be fun. He also really trusted our Program Director Keith Cunningham. And Sluggo doesn't trust any radio management, for good reason. Keith and I texted most of 2020. It's the best decision of my life! Not sure he'd agree, so don't ask him :)

*You've known and worked with Sluggo since before you were at KR*Q, describe what it is like to be reunited with him.*

It is incredibly fun. It's hard to find somebody you have chemistry with. Bean and I stumbled into it, kind of realizing it as we worked together on the Saturday Night Party Patrol in Phoenix. Imagine Bean going to listeners houses to party! When we were doing that show, Sluggo was back at the station running the controls. I told Keith at KLOS I'd only do it If I could do it with Sluggo. He and I are planning a fall wedding. Wish us luck.

Who produces the show? Who comes up with the ideas for the stories to discuss and for the call-in topics?

Both of us. Our support staff is...what's the word?...Non-existent. We both come up with stories, and just wing it from there. If we wanna book somebody, we try it ourselves. We're not good at it.

Do you expect the show to evolve, or is everyone happy with how it is set up currently?

I don't know about everyone, because I'm too self-centered to ask. But I love it.

Can you speculate how many of your fans from your KR*Q days have found you and are listening to you now on KLOS? We hear a lot of callers mention how glad they are that you are back on the air, I wonder if you talk to callers who did not know you from your previous radio life and are new to all things Kev-Dogg.

It's a mixture. There are a lot of people who knew from, that other station. Some of them call and say how happy they are to hear me. That's truly humbling. And there are people who've never heard of me. And there are people who think I'm ruining KLOS, which makes me feel at home, because that was the response Bean and I got at the beginning.

So, you are single and both of your daughters are in graduate school on the East coast. Do you suffer from empty nest syndrome?

I do miss them both. But I probably talk to each of them for an hour a night on FaceTime. Whether they like it or not.

Which Hall of Fame are you happier about being an inductee in, the NAB Broadcasting Hall Of Fame or the Radio Hall Of Fame?

Honestly? They were both scams. I think if you checked the records, we wouldn't exist. Which is only right.

Thank you, Kevin Ryder!