

Playing Chess with Judy Pudy

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When David Pollock, now managing director at Chess, was picked up by Daddy Rabbit and Judy Pudy at the tender age of 19, he had no idea what he was in for. Pollock laughs and punctuates his tale with sharp intakes of breath as he tells Comms Dealer the tale of his adventures prior to setting up Chess.

The hitchhiking 19 year old and a friend had made it from Chicago to St Louis the night before. They had crossed town and reached the freeway that would take them to Route 66 and the 2,000 miles to Los Angeles. Standing at the side of the road waving a union jack, the pair waited until a car and another with a caravan pulled up.

The boys jumped in the caravan and were putting their bags on the floor, when Pollock was tapped on the shoulder by his mate. He turned around to see the hulking driver standing behind them with a Magnum gun pointed in their direction. "You **** with me and I'll blow you away. You don't, and I'll take you all the way to L.A.," the scary man said.

Unsurprisingly, the boys chose to behave. 'Daddy Rabbit' as the driver was known on his CB radio, soon bonded with Pollock. He told the pair that the driver of the other car as his niece, and that it would be a good idea for one of the boys to ride with her so the driving could be shared. Pollock persuaded Daddy Rabbit that he was the best candidate for the niece's companion and at the next gas station, the excited young lad hopped out of the caravan and waited expectantly to see what his driving partner looked like.

"Her CB radio name was Judy Pudy and she was the biggest woman I have ever seen," Pollock says, the fear still palpable through his snorts of laughter. "Daddy Rabbit was a complete reprobate; he drank continuously from a flask of Scotch, drinking till he couldn't see, so we'd have to stop him and take over the driving. But by the next day, we were stopping in the desert and he was letting us fire his guns."

Pollock is a man that accustomed himself to danger and excitement from a young age. As a 16 year old, he ran rock concerts and discos for school children in his area, hiring big bouncers to look after his scrawny pubescent frame on the door.

When he was of age, his father informed him it was time to seek a real profession and sent him to university to study civil engineering. However, the thrill seeking entrepreneur that was Pollock soon had other ideas. "Civil engineering was incredibly boring, and I was still making money from the rock concerts. So I left uni at 19. I wanted to go travelling, so I flew to New York with a friend. We ended up in Canada at the Great Lakes, loading Christmas trees for three weeks. From there we hitchhiked down to America and ended up meeting Daddy Rabbit."

After America, Pollock and his travelling buddy went to Hawaii where they pedalled the rickshaws that operate along Waikiki Beach. They met some Australians who told them they should pay a visit to Oz, so the pair did. While in Australia, Pollock's friend met a Japanese girl who motivated them to pack up again and move to Japan. From there, the boys went to India and returned to the UK when Pollock was 20.

Restless Pollock felt like working in the film industry, so he promptly left the UK and moved on to Los Angeles to make a name for himself. For two years he made rock and roll videos, and was even involved in making the pilot episodes of that fabulous TV cult, Knight Rider. Eventually he tired of the people he was working with and went to New York.

"I set up a business with a friend in New York, putting models onto video. That was good fun for a lad in his early 20s. But we didn't make any money, so I came back to the UK and got into property development," Pollock states.

Over the next few years, Pollock met his first wife, had a couple of children and settled down. As the property market became less buoyant, he decided it was time to establish a regular income and so he set up Chess. Chess initially concentrated on the deregulated utilities, now with telecoms dominating the business.

Pollock uses his experiences and broadminded attitude to shape and grow Chess today. Astrology, feng shui and Buddhism all feed into daily life as the owner and manager of Chess, Pollock says. He explains: "You have to get out of the box and have as many things to help you as possible. I'm a great believer in reading your stars; take any help you can get!"

Feng shui is one of those aids to doing business, Pollock comments. "I read about it years ago. I came into the office one day and moved a mirror. The next day, we did took the biggest order we had ever had. I'd heard about this Tibetan guy who was supposed to be really good at feng shui; his father was a Sharman and he was a really interesting character. Now,

whenever we have to do something physical to reshape the office, we call in the feng shui man.”

Pollock believes his staff are his most important asset, so treats them to a masseuse that comes to the office very few weeks, good quality water to drink and fruit to eat, and a pleasingly painted office according to feng shui principles for prosperity. There are trips to Alton Towers and go carting for staff, plus a barbeque at Pollock's place for everyone and their families each summer. “People tend to come and stay. I want them to feel comfortable and enjoy working here, and we will support them in hard times. We're an opportunity provider; we provide staff with the opportunity to do well, and age is nothing to do with it.”

Summing up, Pollock, now married for to his second wife with whom he is growing a family of six children, comments: “We have a successful business, and if feng shui helps then whoopee! Away we go.”