

FEATURING: The cult of multiple lovers, Argentina's dirty-war trials, and breathtaking press photography
THE SUNDAY TIMES magazine

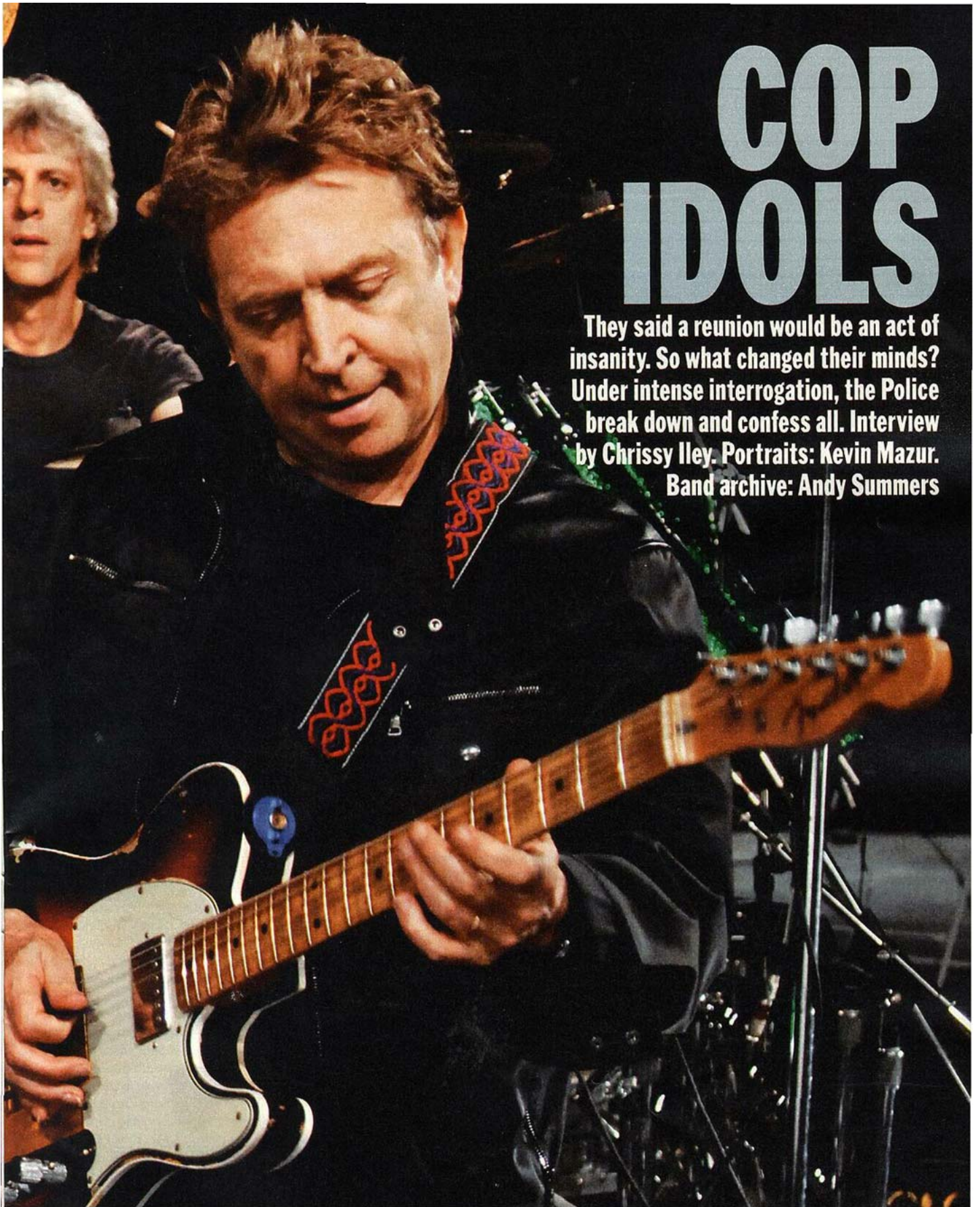
March 4, 2007



EXCLUSIVE

They split acrimoniously 20 years ago. All three forged successful solo careers. So if it ain't for love or money, why are the Police

BACK ON THE BEAT?



COP IDOLS

They said a reunion would be an act of insanity. So what changed their minds? Under intense interrogation, the Police break down and confess all. Interview by Chrissy Iley. Portraits: Kevin Mazur. Band archive: Andy Summers



Above: the Police recording in Montserrat in July 1981 – one of many photographs taken by the guitarist Andy Summers during the early years. Right: rehearsing in Vancouver in February

There is only a small industry crowd of 100 or so, gathered in the cavernous dome that is the Staples Center, LA, home to the Grammys. It's a technical run-through. It's boring. Beyoncé has an unfortunate fringe cut that is sucked into her mouth each time she sings the opening strain of Listen, her Dreamgirls anthem. The crowd stare glumly at the giant monitor and her giant flapping fringe.

Then there is the sound of a distinctive drumbeat. Perched behind the big drum kit is Stewart Copeland, last seen on TV in Britain as a gauche judge on the reality-TV show *Just the Two of Us*; last seen on stage properly with the Police over 20 years ago. You can discern concentration on his face. There's an intensity a long way from the languid arrogance of his TV persona. When Sting and Andy Summers come on, a wave of excitement erupts through the small crowd, which rises to its feet. Sting says: "It's been a long time. It's good to be back." There is a nervousness in the way he says it that draws you in.

They start to play Roxanne. Sting struts, and you don't notice all those years that have passed. From a distance his hair is a halo of blond, his body lithe, his bottom high and round. He has the same slinky moves. The band is an odd-looking trio: Copeland tall, gangly, no bum at all; and Andy Summers, short, his face – once as pretty as a pussy cat's – impossibly young-looking for 64, a decade older than Sting. The music and its power are extraordinary. Whatever

'WHY HAVE I DONE THIS? I'VE DONE THIS BECAUSE IT'S SOME KIND OF HEALING'



The debut album, *Outlandos d'Amour*, 1978, allegedly recorded for £3,000

trauma they have inflicted on each other, the songs remain and they seem effortless, even affectionate with each other.

Backstage after rehearsal, everyone is excited. The band is jumpy, a box of playful puppies, though not from the same litter. Andy exhales: "Wasn't it great? Who'd believe that after all those years I just slipped back as if it was yesterday. It was really emotional." Sting looks at him and says: "You've got groceries on your mouth." Sheepishly, Summers wipes his lips clear of a large sandwich crumb.

Copeland, who seemed the most determined on stage, is the most detached off. He's on his BlackBerry and talking on his Bluetooth headset. Sting is now in a tight-fitted cashmere coat and hat. He hugs me hello and his wife, ➤➤➤ 19

PREVIOUS PAGES AND THIS PAGE, CENTRE: CONTOUR PICTURES. ALL OTHER PICTURES: GANDY SUMMERS



Trudie, comes up. "Wasn't it so exciting?" She presses my hand. She had wafted into the auditorium earlier in a black coat dress and boots, with Robert Downey Jr at her heels. He told me in an interview once how much he loves Sting.

The next day, their Grammy opening performance thrills America. The secret is out and they are riding high. We go backstage after the event. Sting is wearing a satin suit. Is this Sting of the Police, or Sting of Sting? "It's Police Sting, or a bit like him, anyway. I think I'm more mellow now, but I did enter that persona for the performances."

"I was a hard case back then. I come from Newcastle," he says, all glinty-eyed, knowing I too come from Newcastle, where men are hard and don't cry. They wear T-shirts when it snows. "I used to live up to my name. My silly name."

He's happy and giggly. "Why have I done this? I've done this because it's some kind of healing"

You do wonder why. And is this answer enough? He ran away from the Police when they were the bestselling band in the world. You might wonder why he did that too. But he needed the freedom to write songs without the fighting. So why now? Certainly not because he needs the money or acclaim. His lute album, *Songs from the Labyrinth*, topped the US classical charts for 13 weeks and the UK charts for four. He has a sumptuous life, a comfortable one, but he doesn't thrive on just comfort. He needs the highs and lows.

He realises Trudie is missing and she must be found as the Police and its people, in which I am included, must attend a party honouring Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss, two sweet old chaps who founded A&M Records to which the Police were signed. After the party, I don't sleep. I lie in bed with Copeland's film, *Everybody Stares: The Police Inside Out*, playing on my laptop, Summers' memoir *One Train Later in front of me*, and the transcriptions of several Sting interviews I've done over the years to the other side. I am piecing the fragments together. Not so much of why they fell apart, but what connected them in the first place? These three alpha males from totally different geographical and artistic places fighting for musical territory. Maybe the fight was the bond. It was Copeland's band first. He asked Sting to join when he saw him play with the jazz-fusion band *Last Exit*. Then they enlisted Summers, known to both of them through his pedigree as a rock guitarist. Almost instantly they locked into a power struggle: the founder member, the more experienced player and the front-man star.

Above left: Sting relaxing in Montserrat in 1982. Above right: fans at a stadium gig in Canada, 1982. Right: Andy Summers hunts down Police bootlegs in New York, 1983



The next day they play the Whisky club on Sunset. Here they make an official announcement that they will tour the world. An archive Sting interview is being played, with him saying: "If I ever reformed the Police, I'd be certified insane." Sting announces: "Yes, I have the white coat." They play *Message in a Bottle*. News hacks and musos alike hold out their mobile phones, sending the song to whoever is No 1 on their speed dial. I do that too. They say they are not going to fight and they only fought because they cared. They say as individuals they no longer have the need to express themselves so totally in every song. Everyone is smiling.

'AFTER A WHILE I COULDN'T LIE ANY MORE. I KNEW WE WEREN'T COMING BACK'



The second album, *Reggatta de Blanc*, 1979, which went straight to No 1 in the UK

Arthur Fogel from the promoters Live Nation scoops me into his car to await the band in a buttery-coloured suite at the Four Seasons. He was the mastermind behind last year's Madonna tour and previously the U2 tour, which is said to have grossed over £200m, and this tour could make the Police the same sum. Arthur only does global. "I'd been asking for years, would Sting consider it? I got a call in December and it was Sting saying yes. It took me off guard."

The mood is innocent excitement. Is it naive or is it impressive? Certainly, Summers is not fool enough to think it's all going to be easy. "We've had a massive couple of days and I feel like going into battle. I need to strap on psychic armour." He's quiet but not without edge. ➤➤



Left: Police mania at a show in New Jersey, 1982. Right: a fan bares all in Nashville, 1982. Both pictures were taken by Summers, who said at the time: 'The level of power we have now is scary'

Do you think you'll be going into battle with each other? He hesitates. "I don't think so, but we are a rock band, so by definition you have to be somewhat at the edge of battle with each other. It lends to the right kind of tension in the music. You've got to have this slightly oil-water situation." We muse who is oil and who is water. He says he's water with gloopy bits floating in it. We decide *Sting* is oil and Copeland is water, not a glass of it, but Niagara Falls.

What's interesting is that in Summers's book *One Train Later* there is a sense of catharsis. He felt the need to place himself, to explain that with Eric Burdon & the New Animals he had the longest guitar solo in the history of guitars. His contemporaries were Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton. His life hadn't been just the Police.

But after the band broke up, he stopped practising. For him this represents the ultimate act of self-destruction. Imagine Gordon Ramsay on a diet of Cup a Soup. In the book he talks about clamouring for expression. He

'I WAS SLIGHTLY PARANOID THAT THE BOYS WOULD NEVER SPEAK TO ME AGAIN'

unleashes the story of the collapse of the band, the three giant egos, the relentless fighting. And just as he said that the Police was an open wound that would take years to heal, Sting, contrary as ever, decided to re-form the band.

Does Summers think it was because you had finally let it go, that's why it came back, in an if-you-love-someone-set-them-free kind of way? "It's very odd, but I cannot dismiss that element. The urge had been with me for many years to write that book. I wanted to describe my journey before arriving at the Police and how I felt that all these people like Jimmy Page were the same age as me, but it wasn't my time until later. When the Police happened I felt I surpassed everyone else. The dream was realised. Then the dream was gone. I do tell the truth in that book. I don't pull back from describing difficult behaviour. I was slightly paranoid that the boys would never speak to me again, but they loved the book. *Sting* e-mailed me to say he'd read it from beginning to end, and didn't just read the parts that were about him."

Summers's reaction to being on the road was to not come home at the end of the tour; it's not an unusual phenomenon. Sting's first marriage broke up in peak Police,

as did Copeland's later. Summers says that when he went off to take photos, he swapped his marriage for 40 rolls of film. Summers's wife, Kate, divorced him and he garnered the nickname Randy Andy. But by 1986, after the Police folded and he'd failed to find solace in anyone else, he and Kate had got back together and remain so. "It's a cliché, but that life is hard on marriages. My wife is an intellectual, private person who went, 'I don't need this bullshit around me.'

"I wasn't angry with the Police for ruining my marriage, I was angry with myself, and devastated and numb."

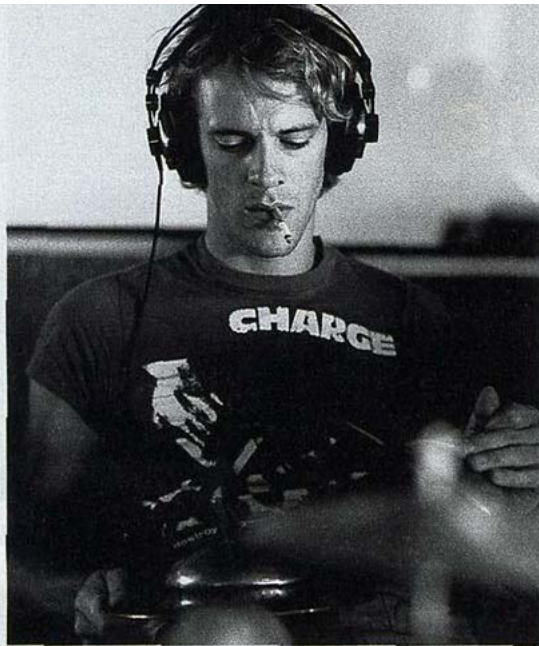
Did you have a drug phase? "I grew up in the 1960s, so I've always loved the odd hallucinogenic. I can't say we were good boys all the time, but I never crossed the line to getting into the abyss. I was driven by the need to preserve the ability to do what I love, which is play the guitar. It was odd that my dialogue with the instrument after the Police stopped happening. I just stopped practising. It came back though, and now I love my guitar and I loved it last night. Exhilarating and frightening all at the same time. And we actually played well together."

His eyes light up and his face brightens. "I have never really forgotten those songs. We all have them burnt into our cores. Stewart and I practised together before going up to rehearse in Vancouver. I had dreams about us playing together again. I can't remember whether they were happy or sad, they were just big and deep and haunting. I never stopped thinking about Sting and Stewart. I didn't see very much of Sting because I live in LA and he was only here once or twice a year. But when I saw him recently after he read my book, we couldn't stop chatting. There was a flow between us that made me think something had shifted. We are always going to be bonded. Sting's had a fantastic career on his own. I started to play in a lot of jazz festivals. I played Carnegie Hall last year, I've had photography exhibitions and three photography books." And while you know he's glad to have done these things that have helped redefine him, none of these things mattered as much as the Police.

For many years, Summers described himself as walking around with an open wound. The wound couldn't heal because there was unfinished business, no closure, no "this is the last album, this is the farewell tour," just slow, painful, passive-aggressive splintering. "I do not ever remember us sitting down and formally saying, 'This is the end of the band.' We just went away and didn't come back." There was speculation in the tabloids as early as 1981 that Sting



Zenyatta Mondatta, 1980. It includes the hit single Don't Stand So Close to Me



had had enough and was culling the band, that Copeland had punched Sting, that he had a broken rib. By the time the band played their last gig in 1986, they knew it hadn't been going well for a long time. Maybe this is the goodbye they needed to say. "For a couple of years we were told not to say anything. But after a while I couldn't lie any more. I knew we weren't coming back. But we never had the talk."

Sting arrives and by now it's late afternoon. The room becomes a darker golden but the sunlight makes Sting's hair impressively lemony. He hugs me hello, his cashmere zip-up is soft but his body is hard. He has a look that can only be described as naughty, and he says: "I've just had lunch. I've been well oiled." It seems that a few celebratory glasses of Pinot were taken. I'm not sure that he's drunk on alcohol, but he's drunk on the buzz of the past few days.

There's a sense that the years that have haunted him are suddenly released. "It was painful. The Police was a painful seven years. Everything you thought that would make you happy was given to you, and then it did not make you happy. It's a horrible but also wonderful lesson to learn where real happiness comes from. It's not from success or money. It took me a while to find that out. I know myself better now. But, you know, we still fall into the same patterns, we just can navigate them better. And there was a need to heal. I escaped this band. I meant it when I said it would be a sign of insanity if it ever came back. I said that every day before I made the decision to get back together. But one day I just woke up and thought, 'Let's do that.' My instinct said this is what you should do. My instincts have nothing to do with logic. The logic of leaving the band when it was the most successful band in the world was odd.

"I needed the freedom to write songs on a wider palette, and I did that for the next 25 years. Every time I had a successful album, the Police went further away. Then one day I woke and said now is the time to deal with this thing. I'd just done this lute album that was more successful than I could have ever imagined. I could do another but that would be painting myself into a corner. Do I want to do another Sting record? I thought, I'm not ready. What will really surprise people, really surprise me? What kept coming into my head was, 'Phone the boys.' Then I made the call. They were thrilled, disbelieving and joyful. And so am I.

"There is such a feeling of warmth for us out there, even with the press." The press usually hate him, send him up, talk about his tantric sex and his love of yoga. But for today

Left: Stewart Copeland recording the Synchronicity album in Montserrat, 1982. Right: the band see off the end of that year in style, sailing to the island of Nevis in the West Indies

the snideness is shelved. When you last released a Police tribute boxed set, you said you begged the record company to package it in a coffin. "Did I?" he giggles. "Oh, God, what was I like? I hope that I'm ricer now, more relaxed, less driven to control everything. We were hugely successful on one hand but hugely dysfunctional on the other."

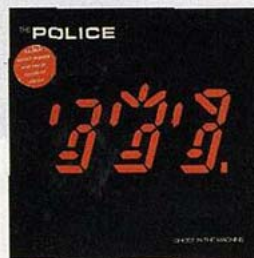
Arthur told me, when he saw the band rehearsing in Vancouver, that they were not very good. "I had this idea we'd re-form and slip back in there," Sting giggles grimly. "There is a lot of work to be done. I have developed a lot of these songs as a solo performer, so they are very different. There are rhythmical and structural differences I've woven in and haven't shared with the others, and they were like, 'What's this?' They said they want to do it the way it was in 1982. I said I want it to represent who we are now as musicians. We had a negotiation about the way to keep things fresh and also respect what we did before. And that's

'YES, YOU CAN HAVE SEX FOR SIX HOURS – IT INCLUDES DINNER, A MOVIE AND BEGGING'

ongoing and I think it's exciting. We never really wrote songs together, that was part of the problem. I wrote in isolation, brought them a finished product. When you start a band, your roles aren't defined but they get defined pretty quickly, causing all kinds of machinations and alliances, but it's hard. I'm a singer-songwriter. Stewart's a great drummer, and Andy is a great guitarist. Within those roles we can move forward, but at first it was difficult." Because they all wanted their moment? "Yes, and that's understandable."

Particularly understandable, as the band was founded by Copeland. It was he who introduced Sting to the blue-eyed reggae rhythm, the drumbeat that established the Police sound in songs like Message in a Bottle and Walking on the Moon. It was an accidental chemistry that drew the band together in the first place. "Most bands are from the same neighbourhood, they have the same background and education. Ours couldn't be more different. Stewart was born in Beirut with American diplomatic parents, Andy was from the genteel south coast, and I am from Wallsend. We didn't have that common bond. Our bond is that we were in the Police and we can make music together."

The bond that started off so unlikely and ended up so ➔ 25



Ghost in the Machine, 1981. The cover graphic depicts the three band members



Top left: the Police in Japan, 1980. Left: a suitably attired Summers takes on a sumo wrestler in Tokyo. He later said: 'I had the shit kicked out of me for three hours.' Above: the band cool down between recording sessions in Montserrat, July 1981

fragile suddenly seems terribly important. "It was a very important performance for us last night. We were very exposed. It had to work because of the premise of going on tour and that we were still a band. Before we went on I got them both together and said, 'Look, we're doing this for each other, we have to play for each other. And we're playing for Kim, our tour manager who died, and we are playing for Ian, Stewart's brother who died. We all started tearing...' And here come tears now. He's mumbling, not whole

FULL, FAT TEARS ROLL DOWN STING'S FACE: 'WE'RE DOING IT FOR EACH OTHER,' HE SAYS

sentences, just odd words. I make out "bond of brothers". He looks at me, full, fat tears now rolling down his face. "You know, we are doing it for each other." I start crying too. It's easy to feel Sting's emotion when he's projecting it in stadiums; in a hotel room, it's shattering. Then we laugh hysterically. They never used to have those moments of group bonding, a convergence of souls before the show. "We never had that. We grew apart within this vortex of tension. We stopped connecting and I want to fix that."

Part of the compulsion to get back was the fixing and the unfinished business. "This business will never be finished. Relationships are never finished, either. When I was in it before, I felt trapped. Now I can enjoy it."

It can't have been very enjoyable to read Summers's book and see Copeland's film. Neither were particularly kind to Sting. Yet the opposite happened. "Andy's book and Stewart's film gave us reasons to meet. Stewart was in Sundance promoting his film and I was there with Trudie. Everyone has their version of the truth. There is no one truth. I wrote my book [Broken Music]... well, actually, I didn't write about the Police at all." This is interesting in itself, that he wrote an entire autobiography where they didn't register on his emotional thermometer.



Synchronicity, 1983, which knocked Michael Jackson's Thriller off the US No 1 spot

He wrote about his parents. "What happened spun me further away from their orbit. That's one of the sadnesses of my life. That I never quite made the circle back. I found a way to communicate with my parents now that I didn't have when they were alive." As he sees the band as his family, it seems imperative that he doesn't lose them as well.

"When I first was in the Police, I felt very much like an outsider. Andy and Stewart had been in the business for a number of years and I was just this guy from Newcastle. I was brutal. I was into the forward momentum more out of insecurity than anything else." Every relationship was distorted. Everybody's marriage fell apart. "Yes, badly. But we all managed to survive and pull back from the abyss."

These days, touring is less alienating. Supporting the Police on the US leg of the tour will be Fiction Plane, whose singer is Sting's son Joe. "You probably think this is nepotism. He is aware of this and it is a huge problem for him. He says he doesn't want to be associated with me. But this is a huge opportunity for him to shine."

You once said that ambition is stronger than friendship. He laughs, squirming slightly. "I must have just said that to get a rise out of them. Did I mean it? Maybe partly. Now I believe friendship is much stronger."

It feels the time is right for a tantric-sex question. Can he really do it for hours and hours? "Yes. You can have sex for six hours, but it includes dinner, a movie, and maybe a lot of begging. Tantra is a well-documented science; it's not just about sex. It's a devotional exercise to express adoration. Sex is a sacred act and incredible fun." He fiddles with his silver bracelet. It has something inscribed in Sanskrit on it. "I think it says, 'Don't do any harm to other human beings'"

I tell him I have described the band as a box of puppies. He says that he had a beautiful black-coated retriever, but he died. "I am a retriever. Send me to fetch and I'll do it. They are loyal and steadfast." Are they intelligent? "No." Are they loving? "Yes." Are they attractive? "Very. They don't bark a lot, they keep themselves to themselves." Do they do what they are told? "They seem to. My wife breeds Irish wolfhounds. We got eight last week. They're so stupid."

He told Copeland he was an Irish wolfhound. Copeland liked it because they are "goofy".

Copeland arrives. He has an exhausting presence in that he talks at you in well-crafted and sometimes delicious soundbites, but not necessarily answering your question. "I sacrificed all of my musical credibility in England" ➤➤➤

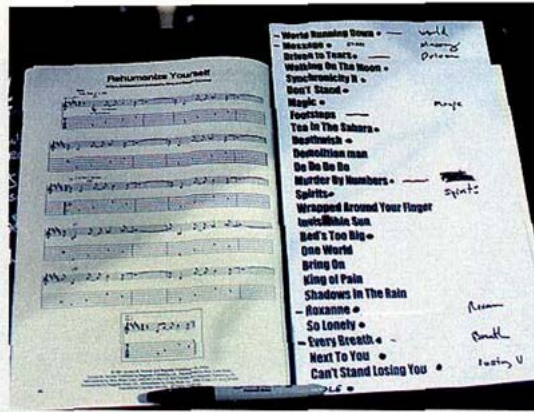
and now I'm a front-of-camera TV schlock guy and it's okay! And I enjoyed the hell out of it. The music is crap. The production is brilliant. The songs are pukeworthy. But that's not the point. It's not about music, it's about human drama, watching people sweat bullets."

So now you have to sweat some of your own bullets. "No, no, tears of joy. Although we did sweat some bullets in Vancouver. We are all alpha males, and in the context of the Police, Sting is our top dog. When I was younger I had a problem with that. Now I'm older, I am wise. I do have a life I am president of, in which I am a film composer and all kinds of things on which to hang my alphaness. Within the band, I'll just play my drums and be honoured and inspired by having great songs. During this past week we've struggled and every so often, and this is a little icky, we did indulge in group hugs. In the rehearsals we reassured each other that if we were frustrated and angry, 'My anger is not to do with you, I am not angry with you.'

"If you were to watch my movie..." he says, raising his eyebrow above his thick-framed glasses in a chastising way. I try to interrupt, "But I have seen your movie," and he continues. "After our first week practising together I realised that I'm incapable of giving Sting exactly the drum pattern he has in his head. I will do my best. I am a third-rate session player but a first-rate tornado."

The tornado phrase still rings in my head. For all his playfulness now, I tell him it seemed like a matter of life or death when he was playing so earnestly at the Grammys and at the rehearsal. "I don't know whether death comes into it. My heart is full of joy. For 10 years after the Police I did not play at all, I lost interest in it."

So he fell into the same silence as Summers, then around the same time he found a need to document that. He came across 8mm home movies he'd taken of the band left in canisters in his wife's shoe boxes. Some of his film is tainted with sweetness, some of it is not. Some of it is sad, bitter even. In the film he says, when you get to where you're going, the



The list of songs the Police rehearsed in Vancouver before the Grammys. 'I've never forgotten these songs. We've burnt them into our cores,' Summers said after their reunion gig

from rock star to professional human being was the sartorial one. About five years after the last Police concert, I hung around my buddies in the polo club and realised I was the only one in the room in leather pants. But I'm not a rock star any more, composers don't need to wear leather pants. I bought a new wardrobe with button-down shirts and chinos from Ralph Lauren. I thought, 'I look like everyone around me, I'm anonymous. I'm fitting in.'

I cannot imagine it would have been the pleasure he says it was to fit in, but he insists he enjoys it. "By the way, in the movie there is a moment of self-provocation about which there is much self-confusion. I've written on my drums '**** off you ****'. The assumption is normally made that it was an address to our illustrious lead singer. But it was just an idle moment not addressed to anyone. There's another rumour: that I broke Sting's ribs in a fight. It's true. I did break his ribs, but what we were fighting about was that he was in pursuit of my copy of The New York Times, which he snatched from me in a moment of monkey-like frivolity. We were joshing around, then there was a cracking sound." Can you imagine that happening now? "No, he'd kick my arse. He runs 20 miles a day and works out every day."

So what has changed about you? "There is little any one of the three of us could do to change each other's opinions of ourselves. There's nothing brilliant I could say that would make Andy or Sting think, 'Gosh, Stewart is smarter than I thought.' And there is nothing stupider I could do that could make them say, 'I never realised Stewart is such a dick.' Their opinions are solidified, and that's kind of relaxing because there is nothing I need to do or say to impress them, because that won't happen," he says, a little bit impressed with himself that he has been able to reach this conclusion.

Although the three band members say they are siblings from opposite ends of the Earth and who look nothing alike, they do all wear the same huge smile on their face today and the same brightness in their eyes. Sting told me that he didn't sleep the night before the Grammys. "That was unusual for me, but I was wired. The excitement is absolutely tangible. It's the thing you feel between a band and an audience. I've kicked and screamed against this for a long time. The others were always ready and I wasn't ready. But this feels right. It was a long time to wait but my instinct says it was the right time." ■

Andy Summers's book of photographs, *I'll Be Watching You: Inside the Police 1980-83*, is published by Taschen in a limited edition at £300 per copy. Orders: www.taschen.com. For details of tour dates visit: www.thepolice.com

Go online now to watch excerpts from Stewart Copeland's intimate behind-the-scenes home movie, filmed as the band shot to stardom, **Everybody Stares: The Police Inside Out**. Visit: www.timesonline.co.uk/audio_video

'THIS IS A LITTLE ICKY, BUT IN THE PAST WEEK WE DID INDULGE IN GROUP HUGS'

ride is over. Were you curating your own emotions?

"No. I did it so I could integrate back into my life, put it on a shelf, encapsulate it, punctuate the Police, the whole story finished. I was going to have a really good year because all this stuff was coming my way because of the film. Then I got the call from Sting that blew everything out of the water. I'd never have dreamt of calling Sting. He owes me not another calorie of effort. The account is clean. We are good."

By making this film, it is clear that Copeland stopped hoping the reunion would ever happen. Now he is grateful it did. Then he was cynical. "I say in the film I had a car that I never drive, a family I hardly know, I am a shell of a person, I am a can of beans, I am a product."

Do you know the family you have now? "I know that family and I have also had more family. I have seven children." There have been two wives. "I am a father of many and a suburban dad, that's really who I am. My family is really important to me, I don't want to be an absent dad. I will be doing this for one year. I might go crazy after three months and have to write a ballet because that muscle needs to be moved for the endorphins to work properly." Yet Copeland's drum-playing is the one place where he can hone his tornado spirit. "The funniest part of the transition