

No more Rude in the morning

 By [Daryl Ilbury](#)

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Jeremy Mansfield's announcement last week that he's leaving breakfast radio is well-timed. No more 'Rude' in the morning? That comes as no surprise whatsoever. So stop wailing and flailing your arms around like hysterical wildebeest, for this is good news indeed.



Jeremy Mansfield

Literally minutes after Mansfield announced his resignation from his breakfast show on 94.7 Highveld Stereo I received a text from a former colleague. The tone of the text was one of shock, and the little sad face at the end told me he was saddened by the announcement. I sent a message back saying I had known for quite a while that Mansfield was leaving, and that I was glad he was stepping down.

Spill the beans

Seventeen seconds later my phone rang. My colleague demanded I spill the beans. So I told him the story.

There is a secret brotherhood of breakfast show hosts - some retired, others still flogging their wares - called BOBSH. Membership of the brotherhood (because we are all men) is attained only after a demanding period of protracted qualification. Among other things, a prospective member has to earn a love-hate relationship with the other media; has to have an entire library dedicated to him at the BCCSA; and his very name has to induce wild frothing at the gums of his respective programme manager. This process takes many, many years.

Mansfield qualified within the first week of *The Rude Awakening* going on air. His entrance into BOBSH was therefore marked with much frenzied discussion within the brotherhood. How was it possible that such a young man so early in his breakfast career had earned his stripes (for we wear striped pyjamas under our monk cowls)?

From that moment on, Brother Jeremy became a much-valued member. He brought beer to our meetings. Lots of beer. He insisted we tell jokes. He wrote most of them down. But, more importantly, he urged us to do good, to help others, especially the less fortunate.

Remain ever vigilant, forever sharp

It was a turning point in BOBSH. We became stronger, and more determined than ever to make a difference in peoples' lives. We made decisions based on detailed research, canny intuition and beer. Lots of beer. One of the key decisions we made was that breakfast radio should always remain dynamic, and that in order to do so we had to remain ever vigilant, forever sharp. We had to ensure we kept what we called 'the edge'.

'The edge' is the fine line upon which top breakfast radio hosts manage to remain balanced. This is incredible demanding for someone with big shoes like Brother Jeremy; but somehow he has not only succeeded, he has thrived.

Great breakfast show hosts have to continually balance being larger-than-life on-air, but humble off-air; they need to push the boundaries, but respect where the lines are drawn; they have to frustrate people into action, but make sure that action is never negative towards others; they have to make people laugh, but never laugh at the expense of others; and they have to be someone that you sometimes hate, but that you hate more the thought of waking up and them not being there.

Integral part of the daily morning routine

And that is one of Brother Jeremy's greatest achievements: being an integral part of the daily morning routine of hundreds of thousands of people.

You see, unlike the rest of the day, during breakfast drive listeners' nerves are frayed, their patience is thin, they don't really want to go to work, and the last place they want to be is stuck in traffic. This is the hostile, permanently toxic environment in which a breakfast show host must operate. More importantly, it's a place where the listener's forefinger is only centimetres away from the radio.

Play the wrong song, the listener hits the button, and you've lost them. Say something they don't like and they change channels. Make them angry and they'll rear-end the car in front of them, causing chaos on the M1; even worse, they'll drive to your studio with a crossbow in their boot. (Ol' Berksy is still talking about that!)

Brother Jeremy, or Tripod as we call him (don't ask), is a master of 'the edge', and it has earned him the respect of the rest of the brotherhood; but not as much as his allegiance to the time-honoured, unwritten rule of breakfast radio - get out while you're on top. There is nothing more pitiful than an ageing breakfast show host shuffling into the studio, adult nappies crackling under his elasticised corduroy pants, his teeth shaking in a glass of water next to the switchboard, all the while behind him people are slowly shaking their heads.

Best possible time

Mansfield leaves breakfast at the best possible time: while he's at the top of his game and with hundreds of thousands of people going to miss him; and at the next Brotherhood of Breakfast Show Hosts meeting, we will toast his success with beer. Lots of beer.

ABOUT DARYL ILBURY

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