



# “It’s good to know I get under their skin”

---

by HENRIK on AUGUST 24, 2010

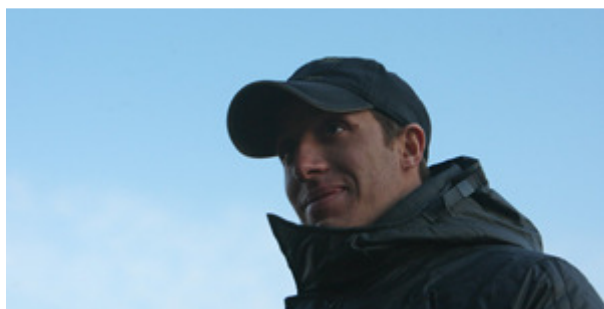


Foto: Magnus Neck

”I don’t really try to wind them up, I mean, if someone does something, then I can whisper in his ear what I’m going to do next time. I don’t see myself as that bad to be honest. Everyone does a little off the ball, but that’s just football, you know what I mean. You’ve got to stand your ground mate.”

Nej, Kenny Pavey vill inte riktigt känna igen sig i medias bild av honom som en hård och hänsynslös spelare.

”I know, I was voted the dirtiest player by the other players in the league. Well, I really don’t know why. I mean, I like doing my talking and my tackles and I like to get stuck in because of my history in non-league and with Millwall. I don’t mind it. I’ve only got sent off once this year and had four bookings, which is not that bad.”

Med ett leende lägger han till: ”But it’s good to know I get under their skin a bit.”

Vi sitter framför brasan på AIK:s träningsanläggning vid Karlberg slott. Spelarna har nyss kört ett lättare träningspass. En efter en släntrar dem förbi oss efter att ha duschat och bytt om. Idel leenden möter mig. Kanske ser jag lite tomhet i några blickar. Efter att ha tränat och umgåtts nästan dagligen i över 10 månader har gruppen nått sitt mål. Drömmar har hörtsammats. AIK har precis vunnit både Allsvenskan och Svenska cupen. Om två dagar börjar semestern och vad fan gör man då liksom?

1985 skeppade Millwalls manager George Graham iväg unge anfallstalangen Teddy Sheringham till Sverige och Djurgårdens IF på lån. Förutom att skaffa sig värdefull speltid hoppades man att han skulle komma till rätta med sin attityd och återvända hem med en gnutta ödmjukhet i bagaget.

Ödmjuk eller inte återvände han med en enorm målaptit. Väl tillbaka i London bildade han giftigt anfallspar med Tony Cascarino och sköt upp Millwall i dåvarande högstadivisionen. Och innan en osedvanligt framgångsrik karriär fortsatte i bland annat Tottenham och Manchester United passade han på att slå Millwalls målrekord och göra sig odödlig bland fansen i sydöstra London.

Föga anade Kenny Pavey att han 13 år efter Teddy Sheringham skulle packa sin väska, hoppa på ett flygplan till Sverige och gå i sin stora hjältes fotspår.

”I lived on a estate next to Brimington Park, just of Old Kent Road, for 15 years and played for a local Peckham team called Athenley. I played alongside Anton Ferdinand, I went to school with Sean Wright-Phillips and Scott Parker, and I also know Jimmy Bullard very well. There were quite a few I played against that made it, Julian Gray for example”, berättar Kenny när jag frågar om hans uppväxt.

Ganska snabbt står det klart att Kenny sällan fått någonting gratis i karriären – men också att han inte är den som kastar in handduken när det blåser snålt.

”I began playing quite late, around 11 I think, and I got scouted by Millwall. I played for them for four years as a schoolboy. In my last year I was looking for a YTS deal (lärlingskontrakt med A-truppen – red), but I’m not the biggest lad around so they asked me to stay and be monitored for three extra months for them to decide. Me and my dad weren’t happy about that. I had been there for so long they should have known how good or bad I was. So I decided to leave and I got a YTS at Sittingbourne instead. They were in the Dr Martens Premier League.”

Och plötsligt öppnades en ny dörr: ”Aston Villa scouted me, watched me for a while and I went there for a week’s trial. I played very well in a match against Coventry alongside the likes of Gareth Barry, Darius Vassell and Lee Hendrie. I scored a volley and had a good game. But at the same time Sittingbourne went into liquidation. The club was actually closed. We couldn’t even get into the ground. So they wanted to get more money for me than Villa were willing to offer. I’ve still got the newspaper clip saying ’Villa dream falls true for Pavey’”, säger han.

”That was a big blow. But with bad things normally come good things. The guy who scouted me had a contact in Sweden, David Wilson, who was a player and a scout for Aston Villa and got me over.”

Han är tacksam för att han övertalades att ta chansen i Sverige, men medger att flytten över Nordsjön var tuff:

”Leaving London for Ljungskile was hard for me. It’s not the capital of the world if you know what I mean. I met a girl and she helped me to settle and made things a little bit easier. Smaller towns probably look after you a bit better. I had a lovely stay there.”

Till säsongen 2006 värvades han till AIK och blev med sin uppoffrande spelstil och never-say-die-attityd en stor publikfavorit på Råsunda. Och 2009 var han en direkt bidragande orsak till att klubben vann sin första ”dubbel” någonsin.

Inför den avgörande seriefinalen på nya Gamla Ullevi fick Kenny ta emot ett mycket speciellt meddelande.

”It was two days before the final game of the season. I got this envelope in my hand. I didn’t know what to expect, but they said I would like it. In it there was a ‘best of luck’ message from everyone down at The Den, and they said they wanted me to come down and show them the gold medal.”



*Kenny Pavey - brev från Millwall*

Trots att Kenny de facto aldrig spelat A-lagsfotboll för Millwall hade hans framgångar i Norden nått fram till sydöstra London.

”It really, really touched my heart. Not many clubs in the world would do such a thing for a supporter. I didn’t think my feelings for the club could get any stronger. I took a photo of the letter and sent it to my dad, my uncle and all my mates. It was an amazing thing for Millwall to do.”

Och nog finns det anledning och tro att meddelandet sporrade honom. En av Sveriges främsta sportjournalister beskrev Kennys inlägg i den avgörande matchen som att han ”precis blivit utsläppt ur en bur efter att ha suttit inspärrad i tio år”.

Och nu väntar kval till Champions League.

”It’s a fairytale coming true for a little London boy from Peckham. I’ve had so many ups and downs in my career so when it comes to highs like this it means a lot to me.”

Den eviga frågan då. Hur bra är egentligen Allsvenskan?

”A lot of my mates come over from England to watch our games and are quite surprised with the quality of the league here”, säger han.

”I would say we’d be Championship standard. I definitely think that if AIK played a Championship side we could pull out a result. The Premier League is another level though, the gap up there is so huge. Off-course, when playing teams like Valencia the Swedish sides get played off the park a little bit, but they don’t get hammered, you know what I mean.”

Det är ingen tillfällighet att Kenny ofta tar AIK-supportrarna i försvar när tidningsuppslagen är svarta. Som supporter själv till kanske världens mest utskällda fotbollsklubb kan han lätt relatera till den inte alltid medialt korrekta behandlingen av fotbollssupportrar.

Exempelvis när AIK-fansens firande inne på planen i Göteborg kritiserades.

”I explained to them I would’ve done the same thing. I told them that supporters of other clubs who had won the league did the same. And I told them my story about the last game at the Old Den when I ran onto the pitch. Well, I actually ran onto the pitch three times, and I was actually playing for Millwall at the time. The first time was during the game and my mate Darren got the match ball. But I will always try to defend the fans in these situations. The media do give them a hard time.”

Ett av Kennys bästa minnen från den gångna säsongen var derbyt mot Hammarby: ”I came on and scored the winner in front of the main stand, I jumped over a few boards and jumped up the fence and stuck my hand on one of the spikes up there and went bananas really in front of all the fans. I had just been on the pitch for a minute. The next day it was all over the papers. They were discussing it on morning TV. People were against it, people were for it. I remember I must have rubbed my face a bit as I had a bit of blood on my nose. One of the other players came asking ‘are you alright mate?’. It was not quite the same cut as Terry Butcher, but it made for good pictures anyway.”



Foto: Magnus Neck

"I like to think of myself as a fan's man, sort of. When I was on the terrace I used to scream, 'get in there boys', so I know what the fans want from me. Watching the fans gets me started and I think to myself 'get him like Terry used to do'..."

Terry är, för den oinvidige, Terry Hurlock, en i Millwall-kretsar avgudad spelare som var känd för sin hårda spelstil och som fick smeknamnet Terry Warlock på The Dens läktare.

När man träffar Kenny framgår det ganska snabbt att det här med Millwall är på riktigt.

"You know I've been going down to Millwall since before I was 2 years-old, and I got so many memories, especially from the Old Den. I was a ball boy there a couple of times. I'll never forget when I went onto the pitch for the last game versus Bristol Rovers. I got a bit of the net, a seat from the family enclosure, some of the pitch, off course. I have a lot of unbelievable memories of my beloved Millwall. I've not been to the new ground that much as I have almost always been playing on Saturdays. I always keep an eye on the results and news. Teddy was my hero. I met him so many times when Ron Bell, this is a name from the past, used to organise the Millwall soccer schools. All of the Millwall players turned up and got blessed. Kevin O'Callaghan was another favourite of mine, Cass was there, as well as Terry Hurlock off course. My uncle is a season ticket holder and goes to all of the games. So are my mates who also travel everywhere. Nowadays I maybe go home twice a year. But when I fucking get back I fucking get back!"

Plötsligt skrattar Kenny till och berättar med ett leende på läpparna:

"Five years ago I was in Uddevalla watching Millwall play Man United in the FA Cup final in a pub, me my missus and the kids, I got my Millwall shirt on, sitting there watching the game on the big screen, and another geezer walks in with a Millwall shirt on, and I swear on my kids life, the geezer was a Millwall supporter, from England, from Peckham and his name was Kenny! I swear on my kid's life! It was ridicules. We got hammered that night..."

#### **Skulle du spela för Millwall om du fick möjlighet Kenny?**

- I've had this question asked loads of times and I think I've maybe got too much in my heart for Millwall. I mean, off course, it would be an honour. It's my club. But I have a wonderful time here in Sweden as well. Never say never mate.

#### **Vad saknar du mest med England?**

- Pie and mash, big time! I'm thinking of opening up a pie and mash shop here in Stockholm. I also miss family and friends and watching my beloved Millwall. If I could have all that here in Sweden I would be buzzing. Apart from that my life is good, the people are really nice, food and restaurants are top-class. It's great for the kids. I've got two little nippers, Charlie and Jessie, and they have both got their Millwall kits. It's a good country. Every time I go back for a visit, I get this sentimental feeling, ah I'm home. It's still home. There's no place like home.

**Fotnot:** Intervjun är gjord i november 2009 och har tidigare publicerats i Millwall-fanzinet "The Lion Roars".

Alla foton, undantaget brevet, är tagna av Magnus Neck.