

CREW CHIEF SERIES...



**ALAN
FOTHERINGHAME
CREW CHIEF**

HOW LONG HAVE YOU FREELANCED WITH NEG?

I have worked with Neg Earth for 9 years and 14 years in the industry.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS INDUSTRY?

I've had a passion for theatre since my school days, influenced by my mum and my granny, who have always participated in drama and drama festivals. While in school, I started volunteering for local theatre, focusing on lighting.

After that, I pursued a degree in production lighting at university, which opened the door to my career. While I learned many things during my studies, it was really the connections and relationships I built with people that played a crucial role in my success.

For instance, my first job was on the Damien Rice tour. The lighting designer reached out to me one day. At that time, I didn't know him very well, but he remembered a conversation we had in a pub six months earlier where I expressed my desire to get into concert touring. He offered me the opportunity, and I took it. I've never looked back! It's often about being in the right place at the right time.

WHAT ARE YOUR HIGHLIGHTS/FAVOURITE MOMENTS OF BEING A FREELANCER FOR NEG?

One of my favourite career moments was during the AC/DC Power Up tour this summer. The entire production was exceptional, and we felt incredibly well taken care of throughout the tour. Everything—accommodation, well-being, work schedule, and time off—was arranged perfectly. We were fortunate to have that experience.

A standout moment for me was during the load-in for AC/DC rehearsals. After four months of meticulous planning around cable management, logistics, and rigging, everything performed flawlessly on the first try. That was a true testament to our hard work and coordination.

I also thrive on challenging projects. For instance, working on The X Factor finals at Wembley Arena was an intense but rewarding endeavour. It was a massive production, and balancing the rock'n'roll aspect of our work with the television side—managing their expectations, scheduling, and processes—was quite a feat.

We approached this project right after wrapping up an ELO tour, which had a much more relaxed pace. Transitioning from six months of rhythm and routine to tackling a demanding one-off event was challenging, but the sense of accomplishment once it all came together was immense.

Lastly, I must mention Johnny Sellers, who was often my crew chief before I stepped up to the role myself. He has done it all and approaches people and tasks with such finesse. I've learned a tremendous amount from him over the years and has become a very close friend.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE NEXT GENERATION WANTING TO GET INTO CREW AND TOURING?

One key aspect to focus on is your attitude. You can possess all the technical knowledge in the world, from understanding the intricacies of moving lights to the mechanics of rigging or motors. However, knowledge alone won't secure your place on tour. You're likely to be traveling on a bus with 12+ other individuals who may come from diverse backgrounds and have varying levels of experience. You'll be spending a considerable amount of time in close quarters with these people, so it's crucial to get along with them.

Many might find it challenging to navigate life in such confined spaces with colleagues. Therefore, it's essential to maintain a positive outlook, avoid holding grudges, and be considerate of those around you. Being clean and tidy is also very important! The spaces you share are your home away from home.

A timeless piece of advice that people often repeat is to always be on time. If you're not ten minutes early, you're late. While some may dismiss this as a joke, it genuinely speaks volumes about your dedication. If you want to be part of this world, showing up on time is crucial. Remember, if you aren't willing to be there, someone else will gladly take your place. So, prioritize your attitude—do you want to be here? If not, step aside for those who do.

Having a genuine passion for the industry is crucial. I often tell people that it's not just a job—it's a way of life. There are various paths to enter this field. For instance, you might start in the warehouse, where you'll gain valuable insights into the equipment, its components, and their functions. However, it's essential to complement that experience with time on-site to understand how this equipment is utilized in real-world scenarios. Knowing the inner workings of a motor is helpful, but without understanding its practical application and significance, that knowledge can only take you so far.

It's important to recognize that there isn't a single route into the industry; everyone has their unique journey. Often, it's about being in the right place at the right time—answering a call or responding to an email first. Sometimes, it feels as though opportunities find you when you least expect it, and a lot of that comes down to your individual character.

It's important how you show up. How you are with people, how you talk and speak and they're the most important things.

DO YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING FACT, FUNNY MOMENT, OR JUST SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

I had the chance to meet Kiefer Sutherland—better known as Jack Bauer from "24"—during my time working on ELO in 2018-2019. There was a show in Texas, and to my surprise, Kiefer was backstage. Sadly, nobody told me he was there! Luckily for me, he reappeared at an AC/DC show over the summer. After gathering some courage, I approached him to say hello and have a chat. He's been a childhood hero of mine, and I even managed to snap a photo with him. He was such a lovely person!