

Matt Smith, Entertainment correspondent **SKY NEWS**

He was a music pioneer, creating a number one song and changing the face of studio recording in the process.



Telstar follows the life of Joe Meek and stars an almost unrecognisable Kevin Spacey

But record producer Joe Meek was also paranoid, deluded and self-obsessed.

Now a new film called '*Telstar*' starring Kevin Spacey has been made about his life and is premiering in London.

The man behind this new bio-pic is Lock Stock actor, turned director, Nick Moran.

Over coffee in a cafe next door to Joe Meek's former makeshift studio in north London, Nick told me why he was inspired to make this story into a play and now a film.

"I couldn't believe the labyrinth of drama we stumbled into, just from just seeing the plaque," said Nick, referring to the historical plaque that now sits on the front of Joe Meek's former base on the Holloway Road.

"It was such a wonderful tale of a frustrated genius whose life was full of incredible accomplishments and then incredible disappointments.

"He wrote the biggest selling record of all time from the confines of his kitchen and the power that unleashed and how that brought about his demise, is just timeless."

Telstar was Joe Meek's signature song.

Released in 1962, it was an instrumental hit for Billy Fury's backing band, The Tornados. But it was the way that Joe Meek recorded the song using his home-made studio changed recording forever.

He used effects and overdubbing in a way that was unheard of in the early 60s. In those days, people simply didn't have home studios, and recording was pretty much done live, in one take, in big official record company owned set-ups like EMI's Abbey Road.

Meek was a pioneer who played outside the rules and is still revered by record producers today.

But this isn't really a film celebrating success. Joe Meek was a bit of a tragic figure. Despite his early hit records, fashion and changing times rendered him out of fashion and the bitterness that set in ultimately ended in suicide.

Nick said: "Joe's Meek's tenacity was the thing that also made him stubborn and gave him an inability to change and to diversify when the records started drying up. It's a great human story."

Nick Moran did think of shooting the film at the original location but the idea got canned in favour of a studio set.

"The worst thing about if we had of used this place is we would have had to take the plaque down," he says looking up at the north London flat.

"You can't do that," he laughs. "That's sacrilegious."