

Fran De Ath

So, to start off with, could you explain why you think it's important Greenham is remembered by subsequent generations?

Yeah, because I, I don't want it to be remembered that we were a bunch of heroines, and it means that people can't do things. I want it to be an inspiration for future resistance.

Oh good. (Laughs). I'm glad because that is one of the questions I asked a lot, because I'm intrigued if, whether people feel that something similar could happen again, or whether it was quite a unique sort of convergence of factors that made it happen when it did. Or, could we do it again?

Well, I think the Extinction Rebellion's, getting on with it quite well, and they're doing non-violence training, which I kind of feel in the past me and my friend Annie - we set up the National Network of Non-Violence trainers, and it's nice to see little echoes of it coming on down the years. And when I was at Greenham, um, I was often interviewed and asked what's the point of it? And other than not wanting American cruise missiles in this country, um, my - the thing is when you do something, it's like throwing a pebble into a lake. And the ripples go out, and you don't know where they will end, and what influence they will have. So I think it's important that Greenham is remembered to keep the ripples going.

So how did you first get involved at Greenham?

Well, it's quite an interesting funny twists and turns. Um, I was involved in a little, anti-nuclear, kind of vaguely anarchic group. And um, a man friend came along one day from that group and said 'Fran, I've just been to this place, you will love it. And they're just setting up a camp', and told me a bit about - I'd not heard about the walk from Greenham, and it's interesting about why I hadn't heard about the walk from Greenham,

because in Bristol - where I'm living now, and was living then, Ann Pettitt and Carmen Coupler - who set up the walk, they were contacting various women's groups along the way, for getting accommodation. And the, the, the walk was women's initiative because there were men on the wall in a supporting role.

Yeah.

And there was a group of women in Bristol, who I called the fascist feminists, because no man in my life has ever dared tell me what to do. I've never ever suffered from that.

Good.

But these particular group of women felt that they could tell me how to live my life. And I resented that. I've always liked wearing lipstick. And they said I shouldn't wear lipstick, and I had to wear ugly clothes. And not only that I had to go out and get a job - oh for God's sake! And basically, they wanted to make my life a misery.

Yeah.

Anyway, so what happened was when that group of people, um, were contacted by Ann, or whoever, and they wouldn't put them up, because there were men on the walk. So it was kept secret from the women in Bristol.

Really?

Yeah.

Gosh.

It was kept secret. So the Greenham walk didn't have anywhere to stay. I don't know where they did stay in this area.

She mentions it in her book about how difficult was in, in Bristol, um, and I can't remember. But they did have real trouble.

So that's why I didn't know anything about it. And it took a man to tell me about it.

Gosh.

And so off I trotted with my boyfriend.

Yeah.

Who I was living with - Pete Crump. And I couldn't have done any of it without him.

Yeah.

And my, he's not my boyfriend anymore - but then. And I think people have been there just for a couple of days by then. And I didn't come home.

Really?

And before that I was planning on building a teepee and going off and living in the wilds.

Okay.

So we finished making my teepee.

Yeah.

And Pete finished making it for me while I was at the camp, and brought it down. So before that I've been living in a tent. So that's how I got to Greenham.

Gosh, so you were there right from the start.

Yeah. Just it had already been going a couple of days. And like I say there were men there as well.

Yeah.

But they were in supporting roles.

Yeah. Yeah. And so you felt like you wanted to stay from the minute you got there, or was it sort of...

Oh, yeah. Yeah, absolutely, I did.

Yeah. And what was it like? I know nothing about these early days.

Well, so much has happened in my life.

Yeah.

And it's a little hazy.

Yeah.

Except that if I liked it so much, and stayed, it must be lovely.

Yeah.

And of course, we had nothing. We didn't have any money. There were no mobile phones. There was no internet. You have to go to a phone box to make any phone calls. So that's how come we established telephone trees, which are highly effective way, and I think it wouldn't be bad to still do that.

Yeah.

I'm sure other people may have explained what a telephone tree is?

Yeah.

You don't need me to say that now?

I don't think anyone else has during an interview. I've read about them...

Well, a telephone tree is various groups around the country. So we have, say, um, the names of six people in six different parts of the country.

Yeah.

So six of us can make just one phone call each, or you make six phone calls.

Yeah.

And that goes out. So each person then has another six.

Yeah.

And it very rapidly grows.

Yes.

And so within an hour, the whole of the country can know that something's going on, and they're on their way to Greenham.

Absolutely, yeah, very effective. Exponential.

Yeah, it was very good. So we didn't have any money. So you know, we literally didn't have cups and saucers and things like that. There was in Newbury - the little racehorse town. Now I also got myself a Barber

jacket, corduroy trousers, and I wore my long hair up in a kind of Edwardian hairdo so, as it was - because I was just a hippie, really.

Yeah.

But I was a hippie in disguise. So I could talk to everybody. And some of the blokes on the camp. They did street performance.

Yeah.

So we would go down into Newbury.

Yeah.

I would be wearing my fit in with the locals clothes.

Yeah.

They would do some street performance. So we've got a gathering of people around. I had a clipboard, because when you've got a clipboard, you can go up to people easily. And I would go up to people and introduce myself politely.

Yes.

And tell them what we were doing and I would invite them to the camp for tea.

Wow!

And because they'd met me it meant they had a focal point that they could come and say hello to, because most of us are shy.

Yeah.

You know, people find hard to believe I'm shy, but I am. And it's nice to know that there is a person. So that meant that local people felt they could come to the camp.

Gosh, and did many people come?

Yes, they did. But first of all, I had to get some more cups.

(Laughs). Where did you get your cups?

So I went to a local china shop here and explained what we needed. And the local china shop gave me ooh, a dozen or so mugs - for free. I then went to the local department store, which I don't know if it still exists, but then it was a private department store, and um, I asked to see the manager and explained who we were, what we were doing, and that we would like a few bits and bobs, please. And he said, 'Oh, that's very interesting. What would you like?' And I said, 'I'd like some chains and bolt cutters.' And he gave them to me!

(Laughs). How old were you when you were doing this?

I was 30, or maybe 31 - yeah, 30 or 31. Yeah. So you know, being in disguise - Barber jacket, things like that. Being pleasant.

Yeah.

Bolt cutters chains. No problem.

Wow! That's inspired. Are these sort of tactics you'd used before, or was this something that sort of came about from where you were?

I find if if you're pleasant people, they want to help you.

Yes.

Conflict resolution has long been in my background.

Yeah.

And I know if you call somebody names, they don't want to listen to you. And I wanted people to listen to me.

Yeah.

And of course, if you want to be listened to, you show respect to people - including the police, and judges in court - oh I've got some hilarious stories about judges in court! And well, I find it achieves a lot more than belligerence does.

Yes, yes.

And that's the kind of thing that I would like my pebble in the pond to do. Because there were so many things that happened because of Greenham. I ended up going to the Houses of Parliament once a month to have meetings with a - an interest group that had been set up. That was actually led by Tony Benn. But he didn't put his name at the top because he felt it should be the woman's name at the top. He was really sensitive to all of those things. I can't remember what woman it was, but all I remember is how absolutely lovely he was, and Robin Cook was there. So I used to meet these people once a month.

Yeah.

And, um, one time when I was there - because they wanted to know what they could do to support us. And they used to do early day motions. You know, I never did know what an early day motion was, and I don't think I still do now.

(Laughs). Me neither!

But they do what they could. And one day I was in there, in this room having this meeting, and outside was this rabble shouting 'Maggie,

Maggie, Maggie. Out, out out. Maggie, out', and they just sounded like a bunch of hooligans. And I just thought well who on earth is ever going to take any notice of them? And I came out and it was the nurses. I mean, my god million miles away from what - so that, I learned a big lesson from there - about what you shout and everything. If you want to do hearts and minds, and bring people around to your point of view, be careful on what the image is that you're putting out. And that's sadly what happened at Greenham is - after we went women's only - which is a very long story.

Yeah.

I don't know how long you've got for this interview.

As long as you want, actually.

Well we might come back to that bit. After we went women's only, um, a lot of the feminist fascist types - that had kept things secret in Bristol - those kind of women came, and remember we were only one camp at this stage.

Yeah.

And so again, they felt they could tell everybody else how to live their lives - like no man had ever dared do to me.

Yeah.

And they were quite often belligerent - wasn't my style.

No.

And all the, inverted commas, "nice people" left the camp.

Really? So did that happen after the camp went women only?

Yes.

And there was a sort of change?

A change in the kind of people that were there. I mean not all these people that came were horrible. And of course, when I say horrible, that's my perspective of what is horrible.

Yeah.

Not theirs. They were doing what they thought was right. But it didn't match with my idea of a world full of compassion and peace. They were very lacking on compassion. So I'll give you an example - quite early on in us going women only, before the word had got out. Remember, there was no Facebook or anything. And it was a cold, dark wet night and three young lads turned up. And I think they'd hitchhiked from somewhere like Sheffield - we had huge report support from Sheffield.

Oh really?

And huge support from the valleys in Wales too. Not much from Bristol - they still didn't know much about it. And um, so whenever I meet women from Bristol saying, 'Oh, I was at Greenham', and I say 'Yeah, but not for a good few months!' Not that that makes any difference - there's no badge of honour about when you go there. It's just, I still get a little bit irked by it. Anyway, so these three young lads turned up in the cold, the wet, the dark, and they were like only 16 or 17 years old, you know, they were just boys. They didn't know it had gone women only.

Yeah.

And so they've been hitching all day. So I said, 'Look, lads, have you got a tent?' 'Yeah, got a tent.' 'Right. Well, look, put your tent up behind that hedge over there. You know, just stay put around there. Because it's gone women only. Have you had any supper?' 'No,' 'Right, I'll bring you a bit of supper', because we always had a big pot of stew on the go

over the fire, and took them around a bit of supper. Well, the next morning, all hell was let loose.

Really?

All hell was let loose. 'Fran let men stay at that camp!' you know, 'Fran is this terrible demon against the cause'. She - oh, and I just said look, you know, a bit of compassion. If we want to save the world - if it hasn't got compassion in it isn't the world I want to save. So that's what it was like, a lot of the time.

Really?

There were arguments and rows. Oh!

But where did the rules come from?

There weren't any rules.

But then that sounds very much that there were rules.

Well you see this is the problem with something without structure. There's a brilliant piece of writing - actually it's enough to hear the title, and the title is 'The Tyranny of Structureless-ness'.

Okay.

Right, so when you have no structure, so when you do have a structure, and you have maybe a committee or something like that, that is answerable and can be ousted, and a new committee put in its place, or whatever.

Yeah.

But when you don't have that, you have cliques that take control.

Yes.

And that's what happened in the early days at Greenham - we had a clique that took control and you know, for a while I was part of the 'let's control it' clique.

Yeah.

Because I'm a bit of you know, I don't shut up easily. And a lot of women don't like to speak up. And those were the women that tend to let - they left.

Yeah.

Some left and set up other mixed camps with with men and - so like at, oh, I'll remember the name in a minute - where they construct the nuclear weapons a few miles down the road. Burghfield.

Yeah. Yeah.

And so - I've lost my thread a little bit.

We were talking about the rules...

Yeah, so when there's no rules, cliques can take over and you can't get rid of them.

Yeah.

So there was one woman, for instance, we were getting... (a cuckoo noise sounds!) I'm sorry, that's my clock. It has a different bird on the hour...

It's lovely!

I didn't think to take it down.

It's alright.

So we have the mail. And we were getting mail from all over.

Yeah.

And this woman always managed to get to the mail first.

Right.

And there'd be invites to go to some high level meetings, and things like that. And she didn't bring it to the camp.

Okay.

She just used to toddle off, herself.

Really?

Yeah.

Gosh.

She's dead now, and I don't miss her. And she also got - and, um, so while she was off on one of these.

Yeah.

I opened the mail, and I just shared the mail with everybody. And we had an invite to go and talk at a peace meeting that was being held at the UN in Geneva. So I, you know, at the camp meeting around the campfire, I'd say, 'Well, you know, we need to nominate a representative for this'. And they chose me.

Oh!

You know, so right. Okay, fine. So then, when this person came back, that had control and was really getting on... she was very good in front of the cameras as-well. We didn't like going in front of the cameras. So a lot of people thought because she was in the cameras that she was our leader - of-course we didn't have leader. So when she came back, she didn't like the idea of me going off, um, because in case I didn't toe, the party political feminist line.

Right.

So I had a minder put on me.

No?!

Yeah, I had a minder put on me. And that same minder was also put on me to accompany me to the Houses of Parliament - those meetings that the camp had said while she was away - I'd said 'Oh look, we've been invited', so they said 'You go for it', and um, so yeah, so I had a minder on me. Yeah, yeah, women can be really nasty to each other.

Yes.

You know, women aren't saints.

No.

We've got the same attributes as everybody else.

Yeah.

And some people are lovely, and some people are not so lovely. And it became a very unpleasant and horrible place to live in my perspective.

Gosh, and how long? I mean...

I was there for seven months. And one day, I woke up and I just thought you know, nuclear weapons aren't the real issue - conflict resolution's the real issue. Because if we evolved a better method of conflict resolution, we could evolve away from this kind of weaponry.

Yeah.

And I suddenly felt that there was - I didn't want to be spending my life devoted to a spin off of the real cause, the real problem.

Yeah.

And I had the good fortune to be able to go to Canada.

Yeah.

And study conflict resolution there. And in the meantime, me and my friend Annie Tunnicliffe set up the National Network of Non-Violence Trainers.

Yes. So that time - I'm quite fascinated by the time that you were there, and the spontaneous organisation or whatever - from the outside, it seemed like all of these things happened almost spontaneously, and I've never quite got my head around like who was chosen to be a spokesperson? How were these things actually organised - somebody must have had ideas about...

Let me give you an example of how it wasn't done.

Okay!

These are the lessons I want people to learn.

Yeah.

So what - Three of us, we had a bank account, and in my memory, we had about £15,000, which back in 1981/'82 was a lot of money.

Yeah.

And film stars and all sorts we're sending us hampers from Fortnums, and cheques - old age pensioners were sending us £1.00, film stars was sending us big cheques. You know, all sorts. And we lived very frugal lives. So whenever we traveled anywhere, because we were being invited to speak around the country, and indeed the one that opened all the letters - around the world. And so, but we would always travel on the coach or even hitchhike, we didn't spend the money on going on trains or anything like that. We were very frugal with it. So when I went off to Geneva on the coach, which I vowed I would never do another long distance coach journey after that one, even though it was only 30. Oh, Blimey. Anyway, three of us were signatories on the bank accounts. And there were plans afoot for organising a spring festival.

Yeah.

Not at the entrance gate where the Americans came in and out. But there was a big open area at another gate that in those days was called the Works Entrance, which subsequently became the Green Gate.

Oh, okay.

And that's where the lorries went in and out, and that's where I did my solo picket. Because I started working with trade unions.

Okay.

So there was a plan on that big open area to have a peace festival.

Yeah.

That wouldn't just be women only - it would just be a spontaneous kind of peace festival.

Yeah.

Well, this person opened all the letters.

Yeah.

And wasn't a signatory on the bank didn't like this much.

Right, okay.

Other people didn't have a problem with it, but this person didn't like it.

Okay.

And so I came back from Switzerland. Having not just been to the conference, I also went and heard some of the conferences there about the Salt Treaty, but that's another story. And um, I came back, I went into the bank.

Yeah.

And the bank said, 'Oh, you're not a signatory anymore.' I said 'I beg your pardon. What do you mean?' 'Oh, no, your leader came in' the one that opened all the mail, and was very good in front of the cameras. So everybody thought she was our leader. 'The leader' had come in to the bank and taken control of all the money.

No way?

Nobody knew what happened to it ever since.

Really?

I don't think it went into her pocket. I'm not saying that. But...

It just - it wasn't under group control anymore.

No money went into the festival that was for sure.

See, I am amazed that sort of, people - I guess people must have been outraged. I mean, how, how did that get resolved or did it not?

It didn't get resolved - no, no, no, she was a bully. She was bully.

Gosh.

She was a bully.

Yeah.

And her nickname by many of us was Stalin.

Really? Oh dear.

But when you don't have a structure, or an organisation...

No one's accountable?

No, you can't get rid of people. And she was charming, and she could make you laugh.

But ultimately wanted to be in control?

Absolutely.

And I guess there is that vulnerability like you say, if there is no structure to protect the voices of everybody, then whoever speaks loudest or strongest gets to hold forth.

You get the tyranny of structureless-ness.

Gosh. Wow, that sounds...

I really want that to be a stone in the pond, rippling out.

Yeah.

Learn from this, learn from this.

So how would you have done it differently? Do you think with it, would there have been a way to set up a organisation, or was there something about the nature of it that people didn't want any kind of organised committees - was there resistance towards doing that?

I mean, I'd never been on a committee in my life before. I had no idea of committee structures. It was only after that, that I ended up on committees. And I also found a way of being - I soon learned how to be a wheeler dealer on committees as well.

(Laughs). Yeah.

You know, a committee in itself isn't the ultimate solution. Because then this particular woman, this, we went, moved on to Central CND and kind of took that over for a little while, in a way. So there was me this particular woman, and my mate Annie Tunnicliffe, and we got ourselves onto the key committees of CND. Because CND had not been for direct action.

Right.

And we wanted CND to take direct action. And so me and my mate Annie, we got that through. So then CND was willing to take direct action. Um, but this other person was on the same committees and basically whenever I mooted anything, she would shout it down. And everybody was in great reverence of her - because everybody still

thought she was kind of like the leader. And so I - she had to leave early from every meeting. So I soon learned to bring things up in Any Other Business once she'd gone. I was as bad as her!

(Laughs). You say, choose your tactics.

You know, I learned how to be a shitty little wheeler dealer on a committee.

Don't you have to be so pejorative.

And it was around then I discovered Quakers, was just prior to then that I discovered Quakers, and started learning the Quaker business method, which is slow and very thorough, and um, it's difficult to explain, but I do believe it's possible to adopt the Quaker business method. Even if you don't have a spiritual dynamic in your life - it does make it easier to have a spiritual dynamic. You don't have to use the word 'God', it's just that awareness that there's probably something more than just your ego involved in life. And I - if anybody's listening to this and is trying to think about organising resistance groups, protest groups, would be to look at the Quaker business method. Because you can get rid of people, but, and we don't think - people think we have consensus - we don't have consensus. So you don't all have to agree. But you agree to put up with each other.

Okay. Hmm. Then an active acceptance is a lot better than feeling like you have no choice.

That's right, absolutely. You're very astute.

Thank you very much!

Very astute, Flo.

So did you where did you come across the Quakers? Were you a Quaker before?

No, no, what happened was most, most people weren't free to come and live at the camp. And so people would come at weekends, or for the odd day to support. And I noticed these various people, not the same ones - different ones - would turn up in little groups wearing Quakers for Peace badges. And they all had three things in common. They all worked hard, they all had a good sense of humor - they were fun to be with, not at all po-faced. And they had low egos. And I was beginning to realise that I had a problem with my ego. Because I was being interviewed an awful lot, I was getting a bit proud, and a bit bit bigger than my boots. And when you're going around the country, giving talks to packed town halls, and people treating you like some kind of bloody goddess, you do get a bit puffed up. And when I came home to Bristol occasionally, I found that I was talking to my friends as I was conducting an interview.

Really?

And I, you know, so being when I met these Quakers with these three things in common - working hard, fun to be with, and low egos I thought I want a bit about, I need a bit of that.

Well, that's a very insightful thing.

So I started going to Quaker meeting. Yeah. And so when I went to Geneva for the peace conference, I, I hooked up with them in, in, in Geneva as well and they do a marvellous stuff there.

They are a common thread the Quakers and although I haven't interviewed any other Quakers so far, a lot of people either were, or, you know, joined in things that had been organised by the Quakers - so went with other Quakers when they were doing the weekends, or came across them there. I think they were much more active than we necessarily give them credit for.

Yeah. And I think it's particularly important to remember that they're fun. Because I think when people hear a word Quaker, they think maybe they're a bit dour. But no, the main thing - well, one of the things that I love about them too is their total acceptance, and attempts at being non judgmental.

Hmm, yeah. Yes.

You know, I say attempts because my attempts often fail! (Laughs).

It'd be no good if we were all perfect all the time.

Yeah, I have been a Quaker since 1981. So, yeah.

Something else for me to look into when I leave you, Fran. So tell me a bit more about the actions you were involved in. You sound like you were so busy, I'd love to hear...

Well, I would quite like to tell you about the time when - that was the trigger, from my perspective, remember, everybody has a different perspective.

Yes, of course.

The trigger from my perspective of when we went women only.

Yes, please do.

So we had men living at the camp, right. Now, of-course, we're humans - everybody's different. And there was a particular group of men - now, we all smoked a joint back in those days. And we all liked a little tippie as-well.

Yeah.

And we had various quite famous people would come by and give us a bottle of whiskey, and £100 or something like that - in their dinner jackets on their way to some do. And it was quite surreal. And when we got the bottles of whiskey, we had to snuffle them - because there was a particular - we would just like one tot at bedtime, whereas this particular group of blokes the lid never went back on, so we didn't get much look in. And whilst we would smoke a joint, you know, privately, they would quite happily skin up a joint in front of journalists. Well, it's not the image you want to be giving out.

No, no.

Because you know, there's no rules - you could just have words with them and try to change their minds. But yeah, so that was kind of going on in the background and they'd like to do a bit of drumming a bit late at night. This particular group that lived in a teepee. Which is significant. And um, so, one particular - and there were other chaps who were just highly amenable, you know, and aww, some deeply wonderful ones - one is he an Indian chap - Shan tum. He, Shan tum Seth - he's a Buddhist teacher in India and is truly - you can just imagine what a lovely soul he was to have on the camp.

Yeah, yeah.

So there were people like him. And then there was the other lot, who I liked, I liked them, I liked these other guys, but, you know, didn't fit the bill for campaign.

Yes.

And um, so one day, we're at the camp, and a bulldozer starts coming up.

Gosh.

To dig a trench through the camp. Well, we spontaneously sat down in front of the bulldozer. Just sat down.

Yeah.

This particular group of chaps that I'm talking about didn't sit down. They remained standing.

Yeah.

So I went to them and I said, 'Look, chaps sit down. That driver' - because he wasn't in the cab, he was quite open and exposed as the driver, - 'that chap doesn't know what your intentions are. He will feel threatened, which could make him...' - when somebody is threatened it makes them perhaps violent - 'We don't want any trouble here. Please sit down.'

Yeah.

They didn't sit down. Well, this made quite a few of us think, because we were planning the very first blockade of the base.

Yeah.

Right, now none of us had been arrested before. We were all quite frightened of being hurt. We didn't know how the police would treat us. And the idea that there might be people there that weren't necessarily going to sit down and peacefully blockade got us worried.

I can see why.

Got us worried. And so, bear in mind, other people might say there were other reasons - this is my perspective.

Yeah. Yeah.

Because I can imagine somebody might be listening to this saying 'No, that isn't why we went women only Fran, for God's sake, what are you saying?' So I just stress, this is how I saw the steps to gain women only - from women's initiative to women only. We had a portacabin in those days. And we had this meeting - women only meeting in the portacabin, to talk about what to do about that group of blokes.

Yeah.

Now bear in mind, I hadn't done my course in Vancouver yet on conflict resolution.

Okay, I'll let you off then what happens next!

And so we decided that for on the run up, just on the run up and including the blockade, we would go women only - thinking that we will probably go back to women's initiative after the first blockade, but that wasn't clearly stated. But we said on the run up to the first blockade - I think it may have been in April. April 1982, but memory's a little hazy - somebody else will remember the proper date. But I do know that I was given by the bunch of Buddhist monks that were there, they gave me I've got a lovely picture, I adore it, they gave me their, their bouquet from their shrine - of pussy willows and stuff. Anyway, I digress. So we decided to go women only. And when we came out and announced it, there was quite a lot of upset let's say, because it meant we were throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The nice chaps had to go - I mean, they were they were all nice chaps. They just weren't all appropriate for our campaign.

Yeah. Yeah.

Had to go. And now having done the conflict resolution studies, I realised that we just didn't analyse our problem.

Okay.

We just jumped straight to problem solving.

So with the benefit of hindsight, and conflict resolution training, what do you think the problem was with..?

Well, I basically, because, again, it ties in with no structure.

Yeah.

Because it meant nobody had the right to go to those chaps and say, 'Shape up or piss off.'

Yes.

Which is what needed to be done. Those chaps that centered around that teepee needed to be told to go. But of course, we didn't own that land. We didn't have any structure that said who could and couldn't be there.

Yes.

So it was easier to make a rule of women only.

Yeah.

Right.

Yeah.

So analyse your problem, but also have a structure. So they all went. So the irony of it is that the ones in the teepee moved off to another peace camp that had already set up somewhere else. And they moved on there. And within weeks, that peace camp made its first rule. You'll never guess it! And so they hadn't analyzed their problem either. They made the rule...no tepees! Yeah, they did. They did. That was their way of getting rid of them!

(Laughs). Why no teepees?

**Because they lived in a teepee and they could get rid of them that way.
(Laughs).**

That is brilliantly ridiculous.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I've seen subsequent campaigns, oh what was that marvellous one, you know where they're outside St Paul's and all of that?

Not sure which one you mean

**It started in America moved over here with the economic collapse.
What was it called?**

Oh, I can't remember.

But anyway, that kind of campaign - again, they imploded, because you get homeless people, you get junkies and drunks. Not bad people, any of them, but they tag along, and the, you know, the whole thing starts to get a bit difficult, because nobody has the right to tell people to go away.

Yes. Yeah. No, I know.

And I worry with Extinction Rebellion, that there will be elements that want to throw bricks through windows and everything, who will get all the press coverage, and it's highly likely that they are agent provocateurs. And they are real. It isn't conspiracy theory agent provocateurs do exist.

Have you come across agent provocateurs?

I think so. Yeah. Because you don't know for sure. I mean, to be honest, I often wondered if this woman that got control of the post and

everything I wondered - no I think that's a bit far fetched actually. But um, I just want to say anything bad I can about her really! In true Quakerly fashion, I don't think! In forgiveness and compassion!

(Laughs). I think it's okay. Sometimes you have to vent these things, don't you - get it all out there. You'll feel better afterwards.

And I would just like to say something positive as-well about the kind of support that we had in the early days. So one night, um, it was a very hard winter and we had a lot of snow, and cars weren't getting through. And I woke one night, because a car arrived and it was, it was the middle of the night, or very late at night and I heard a car. I got up - I mean, I was so cold that I used to wash in the morning with the water from my hot water bottle, because everything else are frozen.

Gosh.

So I woke one night, heard this car. And what to me were old people - they're probably my age - these two old people had got through determinately in their car, and they said 'We just couldn't sleep for worrying about you all. And we thought what can we take them? And the only thing we thought that might be useful...', and they opened their boot and they had a boot of kindling wood.

Oh, bless them.

With support like that, you can do anything, you can do anything.

And that spontaneous support also amazes me - the idea that people just thought okay, I'm going to go and help, I'm going to go and join in.

'I can't sleep until I know you're right'. Yeah. I was trying to be on a positive note, but I just thought of a one, isn't it. One of the things that happened that, you know, I worked really hard to get Newbury support and got quite a lot of it. Including wives of the military as well.

Gosh.

Because behind every soldier is a woman who supports them. Let's not forget that. As-well as female military. So I put a lot of effort into all of that. And then when I'm sorry to call them such a derogatory name, but when the fascist feminists kind of took over, and they were what I call political lesbians.

Okay.

And I've had it - you know, I think if people - I've had a lesbian experience, I'm not trying to deride. But there's kind of I don't know if you know what I mean by political lesbians? Anyway. And they used to wear quite outlandish clothes, and in the middle of Newbury - sleepy conservative Newbury, they would snog. Two women snogging in 1981/82 in Newbury. You can imagine our support fell away pretty quick.

Really?

Yeah.

Under provocative behaviour?

Yeah. And because for them, their feminist issues became more - this is my perspective.

Yeah

Their feminist issues became more important than the campaign against nuclear weapons was okay. And so then when I left the camp, and I'm working on central CND, and it came to be time for when the weapons were going to be delivered to Greenham.

Yeah.

And at central CND we wanted to organise a huge demonstration at Greenham the day those weapons arrived. Now bear in mind, the support for Greenham was phenomenal. People were actually flying in from Australia to go to Greenham, and they weren't there on a tourist trip. They came to go to Greenham. Yeah, that's the kind of support we had worldwide, and the kind of support we had around the country. People hearing this who were not alive during that time, cannot conceive of how frightened people were of nuclear war.

Yeah.

It was tangible. We did think we and our children we're going to be blown up. It was far scarier than climate change and Brexit put together. It really was. And so all these people that were terrified of a nuclear war - we had massive support. And men sending money in, so yeah, let's not forget it's a women only camp, but without the money and the support of looking after the children while the women came to the camp - let's not airbrush the men out. I want to talk about airbrushing as well.

Okay.

I think it's an important point. Yeah. So CND we decided, you know, we didn't really organise anything other than saying everybody just get there for that day. Because it would have been so big, and just people turning up, it was going to clog the whole road system up for the South of England - it would have been big. Yeah, I mean, big big. Not very good with words like that!

(Laughs). Big-big will do!

Big-big will do! But everybody's kowtowing and having to ask permission. So they said, 'Oh, well, we can't do it unless we have permission from the Greenham women to do it'. So we're saying 'I don't think so, you know, it's not private land. Anybody can turn up.' 'No, no, no, we can't organise it without permission.' So Bruce Kent, and some

other people said, 'Fran, you go down to the camp and ask permission.' So meeting was set up. And I went to this meeting. And I don't think I was belligerent, I explained, you know what it was about, and everything. Do you know what the reply was?

What?

'Your consciousness is at a different level than ours'.

What does that even mean?

That feminism was more important than nuclear weapons.

(Sighs).

And, because they didn't want men, and it was going to be just a mass thing. And no, no - I was at a 'lower level of consciousness'. So that was that. Now, this is where I get really upset about Greenham, because my theory is from that day on, I think - well, from that day, I think there was a psychological need for these thousands - if not millions of people who would have come - a psychological need to be there.

Yeah.

And when they were denied that I marked that the day that the peace movement imploded. Because it started - member, CND membership fell away. And people - the younger people in particular, turned to animal liberation. And if you - anybody doing a PhD study - it will be interesting to see the date when the animal liberation movement started to grow, and CND membership fell. Interesting correlation.

I interviewed a mother and daughter. And the mother was 87, I think and had been at Greenham - weekend support, and her daughter had said to me, that while she had gone on a few of the actions, animal liberation was what she'd got into instead of being involved in the peace

movement. So that was what the thing was amongst teenagers at the time.

But it's interesting - so instead of stopping the world blowing up - which is what it felt like, because we did subsequently go to Russia to have words with them as well. But - turns to animals? I mean, okay, alright. But you know, it's not really on the scale of world peace, is it?

No, it's not. I think that one missed me by - animal liberation.

And I think it'll be interesting to look at the dates on that one. And so I've always actually, whilst we're heralded as this marvellous movement - which it was - I also think it was responsible for the decline of the movement on that day. Which will be a highly controversial subject, because the camp carried on, and, you know, the, and the, you know, the camps expanded around the whole place and everything and it grew and, and everybody who came who had no idea of the background of all these things, um you know, you wouldn't know all this stuff before you go. And so you go and you meet lovely people. Because, eventually, you know, the fascist feminists weren't in the majority anymore. And more - I, you know, different types of people would be going, and so people would be having these inspirational, wonderful experiences without - you don't know the background though, do you?

No, no, no.

So I'm not trying to decry those people's experiences whatsoever. And if it hadn't been for Greenham, and then me going off doing conflict resolution in Canada, and Greenham was the complete springboard for the rest of my life. It hasn't been my life, but it's been the springboard for my life, and who just thought that somebody at Greenham would have ended up working with the UN, for God's sake!

It is very impressive.

(Laughs).

I, it's, I think the threads that come up again when I talk to people are that it was undeniably influential in whatever they were doing - no matter what age they were there. I haven't spoken to many people who were involved in that sort of central group, that initial set up and those decisions about the camp game women only, and, and being spokespeople - they tended to be people who had sort of, like you say, drifted in at the edges and been involved and found a really affirmative experience. So it's been really interesting to sort of hear from somebody who was, like, heavily involved in that - what feels like that sort of central part of the camp where these decisions were made, or where people went out and did their public speaking. So it's, yeah, it is really interesting to hear what you've got to say about it. Definitely. It's very different to a lot of people I've met - because there can't have been that many people I suppose involved in that initial bit?

And you say about the public speaking - that again, so when I was about to go do my first bit I thought '(gasps) I've no role models. Oh god. How do I do this?' And I've never, I've quite often at school been the one that stands up and talks, but yeah, so I actually thought about what's a role model. And cut a long story short, I used to go to the Schumacher lectures, and I was at one - there were three speakers and two were academics, you know, 'Lalalalala' and then this third one came on, and he was this great big American First Nations person. You know, an Indian person, and machismo seething out of every pore. Right? He stood up there. He was like the essence of man! Very charismatic and it's like 'Whoa!' It's quite a big hall and there's this essence of man up there. I thought, blimey! No notes. He spoke from his heart, like a poet. He had a complete brain bypass - unlike the other two speakers, right, straight from the heart. And he had been involved in violent protests about land. And seen the error of his ways and turned to non-violence. And to hear somebody like him speak straight from his heart - he was my role model.

Oh, good.

And so that's what I did. I never had notes. And I can remember standing in big town halls, like Sheffield, or, you know, Manchester, somewhere like that. And um, no notes. And just speaking from my heart, losing my thread, and saying, so I'd just say, 'Oh, I've lost my thread', so people would shout out where I was. And, but my point was, and I think this is a ripple I want to send down as well, with the stone, is people want to put you on a pedestal. Because it lets them off the hook. Because if they think you're so bloody marvellous, that means that they think they're not. And they can't possibly do what you do. Well, that wasn't what I was trying to get the word across. I was trying to get the word across of empowering people to do whatever they can.

Yes.

And so that gets a bit tricky when you're the one up the front - trying to step down from that pedestal and empower other people. So it's things like okay, not everybody's free to go home, but you know, we can lick envelopes. We can be part of things like that. And in my opinion, one of the most important things anybody can do is if you're standing in a queue at a bus, or anywhere like that, whatever topic you're involved in - down the line in the future people - whatever topic you're involved in, turn to somebody in a queue and just start talking about it. Ask them, you know, 'So what do you think about climate change?' Or 'What do you think about so and so?' Keep the topic alive. And that's how it grows. And it's not the same as social media, because we didn't have social media then. But even now, just having a real conversation, so trying to get that across. So it's about this. You have to watch your ego - because like I said, I've had trouble with mine. And try to step down from that pedestal and find ways to empower other people to do whatever they're capable of, because their life circumstances - they've got to pay the mortgage or whatever you know. But how everybody can play their part.

Yeah, yeah, definitely. So I'm going to return to the women only theme, because the non violence, and the fact that you felt that the men who were not taking part in the spirit that you needed them to take part in.

So, a lot of people have said that the absence of men was absolutely vital for it being non-violent or continuing to be non violent. Do you agree with that? Or do you feel that actually, if you dealt with it differently, you could have had men and stayed as peaceful as it stayed?

It is a very difficult one, because actually men are just as capable of being non-violent as women are, you know, the wonderful Shan tum Seth himself. And there are plenty - Gandhi, for God's sake. There are plenty of non-violent men, and there are plenty of violent women - and they may not be physically violent, the women, but they're extremely violent with their tongues. I've been permanently damaged by some women's tongues. You know, you could spend a lifetime in therapy after a woman's tongue lashing. Yes. So, no, I think there's an equality in non-violence between men and women. Um, but I think it's possible that the camp being women only freed women up to go there. Because, you know, most women were in relationships, even if it was with another woman, and they stay home to be with the children, or earn the money to pay the rent or the mortgage. Um, elements of jealousy can come in. And so oh, you know, 'If you're going to be down there, you know, you're going to meet these other...', that kind of thing. Whereas when it's a women only thing, um, I think it's easier for, for women to go to it. From the domestic side of things - I remember once, there was these two women used to regularly come - maybe about once a month for a weekend. And, you know, a lot of these women were very straight kind of ordinary housewife types. Marvellous. And, and not like the media try to depict people at all, just that when you've got a wooly hat and a warm coat on. Anyway, so there's these two particular women they'd come, and I'd say - 'Your husbands, do they go away on fishing trips or playing golf or anything like that?' And they'd say, 'Yeah, they do. They do.' And I'd say, 'Right, do you ever go away for a weekend? Just to do something lovely for yourselves?' 'Oh no, no, no'. So I said 'So you can only come away for a weekend if you're doing something altruistic?' and they said, 'Yeah, I suppose so.' So I said, 'You know, I mean, I love you coming here. But from my point of view, and a feminist principle, instead of coming here next time, why don't you go off and do something for yourselves?' Oh, that was a very difficult thing for them.

And some other people overheard this, so then there was a big row that Fran is, you know, not toeing the feminist line, and trying to put people off, and this that and the other. But it was just my kind of point of principle really, that men could go off and have fun but women couldn't. Although they did have some degree of fun at Greenham, but let's face it - not the same as going for spa weekend, is it darling?! (Laughs).

No, sadly not.

Yeah, I did want to talk about airbrushing. If that's alright?

Yes. Yes, please do.

A woman got commissioned to write a book about Greenham.

Yeah.

Or compile a book.

Yeah.

So she asked, you know, us little lot to write a chapter. So I wrote a chapter about my experience of, stuff, and I was still living at the camp then. And she sent it back to me having edited it. And every time I'd used a man's name, she'd taken the man's name out and wrote 'A friend'. So that it would appear that it had always been women only.

Really?

And I wouldn't have it, because also I wanted the men to be acknowledged for the value that they have played. And um, she wouldn't have it. So I had to withdraw my piece from that book.

Really?

Which unfortunately I never kept. So I've been very bad. Wished I'd kept that. So, the first book about Greenham became like the definitive book, and all the people in - who had written their chapters in that book became the 'go to' people for all the various journalists and researchers. Because I wasn't there. Airbrushed out, airbrushed out - because I, I think, okay, compassion and telling the truth.

I think well, and once people get a story in their head, then they stick with that as what happened.

Yeah. And I think this is something else I'd like the ripples down time to say is that manipulation of history isn't something that was just done in the past. It's still going on now. And that's why I'm interested in this project, because you're letting me have my voice, which has been silenced on this matter.

Yeah. Well, I'm very grateful that you're - that you're allowing us to hear it.

And I'm still in touch with several women from those days who, you know, and it's led to lasting deep friendships.

Although there never is only one side to anything. As always...

No, I'm not trying to deny - like you say, I'm not trying to deny the other people that came along who didn't know all of this, and they, I don't want to tell them your wonderful experiences are all a sham. That isn't what I'm trying to say at all.

No, no.

I'm just giving my Greenham.

Yeah, and I think that's, that is the beauty of the project - is that it allows everybody to say what their experience was, and not everybody's going to have the same, or the, or even all positive or all negative.

Yeah.

People must have gone through some hard things as well.

**People actually turned up with boy babies, and they had to go away.
(Laughs).**

Oh no!

Yeah, can you imagine? You turn up with a baby, and they're asked 'Is that a boy or a girl?' 'It's a boy.' 'Oh no, go away.'

Because I asked that question of somebody else, and they didn't know about about children and male children...

They weren't allowed - not in the early days.

Really?

No boy children!

Gosh. Even children.

Even children.

Wow.

You can imagine it. But this is when it was still the one camp. Pretty intense.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Intense (in-tents) literally!

Yeah. So how long did it take...

Also benders - I wasn't in a bender but some people were in benders. And like I said, I used to get on well with the court people. Because I was always polite, and I always conduct my own defense, and always go on my own, because others used to go along with you know, saxophones and face paints. Fine that's their style - not my style. Dignity's important for me. Says she, lounging around!

You look very dignified!

So one time I was waiting for my case to be heard and by now I moved off from the main camp and I was living on my own in a teepee. Down by the works entrance. I never like calling it the Green Gate. It was too euphemistic, and by the works entrance, and I've got lots of stories about living down there on my own.

Please, do tell!

Anyway, so I was in court one day. And it the clerk of the court, and the usher and all that all knew me quite well. And I forget if it was the usher, no it must have been the clerk of the court came up to me and he said, 'Oh Fran, I've just heard that the bailiffs are coming up to the camp. I've changed when your case is being heard. You're going on next. So as then you can get it over with, and you can nip up there quick and save your stuff.'

Aww! How kind. So how often were you in court?

Well, I didn't I didn't keep count.

Yeah. What were you in court for?

Well, my favourite one - the only one I really remember.

Yeah.

Right. So I had moved off from the main camp for reasons that you can understand. I was - and I was also doing this solo picket at the works entrance. So I was in this big open area in my beautiful - it was very beautiful inside - the police used to come with cups of tea, and I sometimes used to go for a bath in a policeman's house. My argument wasn't with the police.

No.

It was with the government. And so, you know, hearts and minds.

Yeah.

Anyway, so I wake up one morning, and I can hear drilling. Now. It was a leafy lane. So there was the little A road, and then this leafy lane going up to the site, of the works entrance. And there was one house up near the end of the lane, and nothing else. And I heard this drilling, and I got up it was a warm day and I think I just had a pair of culottes and a T shirt. And went over. And there they are digging a trench up the lane. Now, so I said 'What what are you doing? And they said, 'Oh!', and it was a bunch of Irish navvies. And, 'Oh, what are you doing?' They said 'Oh, we're digging a trench to put a telephone line to the house.' I said, 'No, look, there's the telephone line up there on the telegraph pole. You're not doing that. Do you know what's at the end of this lane? This is where they're going to be putting nuclear weapons. You could be laying the cable that the button is on the other end that will set off world war three.' And they're going, 'Oh, be-Jesus', I can't do an Irish accent!

(Laughs). I do you want you to try but I think you probably ought not to!

And they had this foreman, who was just standing there doing nothing. So they wanted to stop work. But you know, they didn't dare. And there was a spoil heap. So I sat down on the spoil heap, so they had to stop work. So of-course the foreman gets a little bit agitated, but wouldn't - 'It's alright, lalalala!' You know, chat chat chat, yeah. So he goes off and phones the police - because there wasn't mobile phones. And the

police come - well of-course they all know me, they've all been for tea in my teepee. Right? And because honestly, God, just digressing - it was very beautiful, my teepee. And there is nothing like an open fire, you know, and getting in is all magic. I've got a lovely big brass tray with my teapot and my cups and saucers, and it's all beautiful rugs. It was lovely. Right?

It sounds it.

Everybody - is just magic. So they used to love coming. Who doesn't?

Absolutely.

So they come along and they say, 'Oh, Fran! Come on. Get off', and I say 'I'm sorry, chaps. No, um, you know what this cable could mean, don't you? No, no.' 'Oh come on Fran, we're going to have to arrest you.' 'Yeah, I know.' 'Well look, just stand up Fran and walk into the van.' 'No, sorry lad, I can't.' So they very gently had to carry me off and put me very gently into the police van, and off we go down to the police station. So we get there, and everybody 'Oh, hello Fran!' And then after a little while - I'm very dignified. And after a little while a police woman comes and says 'I'm very sorry Fran, but I will have to do a search now.' I say 'Oh, yes, that's all right.' All I've got on me is my tobacco, because in those days I used to smoke rollies. And I pulled my tobacco out of my pocket and she said, 'Oh, that's alright, search is done then.' And then she said, 'I am, I will have to take you down to your cell.' Now, you're going think I'm making this up. Honest to God, I don't make it up. So they, she takes me down to the cell. And next to it there's a door open and it's a bathroom. I said, 'Oh, maybe I'll just nip in and use the loo before I go in there'. So go to the loo, turn on the taps, wash my hands, and I said, 'Ooh, hot water out the tap, it's so nice, isn't it?' And she laughed and she said, 'Well, would you like a bath?' I said, 'Ooh, yes, I'd love a bath'. Well, there's this great huge bath. And she looked at it and she said 'Oh, it's a bit grabby, isn't it?' So me and her scrub the bath together.

(Laughs).

So I run this huge, deep bath, and I'm in there. And then, and there wasn't a door - it was a curtain to the corridor. And she had to stand outside, and after a little while, but there was a male cough - '(makes coughing noise) I thought you might like this Fran'. Tucked under lovely soap and shampoo. Not that I was dirty. He said 'Not that you're dirty, but I just thought you'd like it'. Clearly nipped out to the shops. 'Oh, thank you very much'. So of-course I'm in there, I'm loving it. And she said, you really will think I'm making this up. I swear to you. I'm not making this up.

I believe you!

She says to me, 'Fran, I'm awfully busy. Do you mind if I just go and leave you in and when you're finished will you just pop yourself into your cell?' (Laughs). Of-course I laughed. I said, 'Yes. I'll pop myself into my cell.' So eventually I did duly, pop myself into my cell, but I was no fool - I didn't close the door. So I was sitting in my cell with the door open. So then the chap comes along, and says 'We're going to have to close the door now, but would you like some lunch?' 'Oh, yeah that would be nice.' He said 'You're not vegetarian, are you Fran?' I said 'No, no, but I don't get to eat meat very often.' So after a little while, a slot opens in the door. And it was on a tin plate with melamine cutlery. But it was a lamb steak, with red wine sauce, with the most delicious vegetables.

(Laughs). Oh gosh!

And so when they came back for the plate, I said 'Well, that was very nice - not at all what I was expecting.' And they said, 'Well, we've had your hospitality. We didn't think you would like the police canteen food. We popped up to the local hotel and got it for you.'

Oh my days! That's amazing. (Laughs).

So then I'm let go later in that day. So then yeah, I don't know how many weeks passed and it's the court case. So like I say, I do my own defense. And I always do this thing that lawyers in those days didn't know about. I still think they don't know about. And this is a ripple, again, in the pond. Everybody know this - you don't have to plead.

Oh!

You have a right not to plead, because they charged me on obstruction. Which of course is technically true. But I'm not going to plead guilty on principle, but to plead not guilty will be lying, which would be wrong. However, on the day of the court case, they changed the charge to action liable to cause a breach of the peace, which was a much more serious charge, because it meant that they could have given me an injunction so as I couldn't go to the camp anymore. So it was really important. So I still maintain my right not to plead, and they have to try you as though you're pleading not guilty, but you're not.

So you're not lying?

So your integrity is maintained, and that's important. Because the whole thing is about global integrity. And if you don't do it in your personal life, or at least try to make a better shot of it, I shouldn't speak bad about people. Anyway, so um, so I said to the magistrate, 'I believe I have a right to adjourn this case, because my charge has been changed. And I have a right to prepare my case. However, I can see witnesses have come' - the Irish chaps were there, 'And I don't want to take up their time, and the court time, so I'm willing to be heard - on the understanding that I'm allowed times of silence before I answer, and before I give any - ask any questions. So as I have time to gather my thoughts.' That's a very dignified thing. And they said, 'Yes, that's fine'. So, up comes the prosecution. And basically, they didn't do much of a job of it. They just said, 'Well, you know, she was sitting there - action liable to cause a breach of their praise and she was arrested.' So then I had to base my defense on that. So um, I, you know, witness there. Up comes first Irish navy. So I said, 'Now, if um, I'd carried on sitting there

and the police hadn't taken me away, would you have got angry with me?' And they said 'Oh, be-Jesus could never have got angry with you love. Never got angry with you love.' 'Right. Thank you very much.' Second witness come up. Same question. Same response 'Could never got angry with you love'. So now you can see the prosecution is looking a bit upset.

Yeah.

So the prosecution stands up and said, 'Well, hypothetically, hypothetically' - which I don't think they're really allowed to ask - 'Hypothetically, if they had got angry with you, what would you have done? Because this has been breaching the peace. What would you have done?' So I said, 'Well, actually, I'm well known for making cups of tea. I would have...'. (Clock sounds) there's my clock again.

I like it.

And if anybody ... (clock sounds) there goes my clock, it must be one o'clock. No, no, we're past one o'clock. Anyway. So if they had got angry with me, 'I am well known for making cups of tea, I would have got off that tip. This spoil tip. And I'd have gone to my teepee, and I'd have made us all a cup of tea, and talked about it.' The whole court erupted in laughter. Well, there was a woman at the back, nothing to do with Greenham, who was sitting in waiting for her case to come up. And she said in this loud voice, 'She's like bleeding Mary Poppins'. And the whole court erupted in laughter. And the case got dismissed.

Very good.

And that got a nice write up in Newbury newspaper. Yeah. So that was my style. But I think it's important that people know about the right not to plead. I've been trying to feed that into Extinction Rebellion, but I don't seem to be getting through to the right people.

Okay. Okay. Well, I'll see I'm on the peripheries of being involved in Extinction Rebellion. I'll feed it in as well. See whether they can get it.

There's hundreds of stories. I could go on for hours - that's probably enough?

Well, it depends. Is there anything you feel you haven't covered that you would like to?

Well, I'd like to end - I know it sounds like I've been hypercritical, but I think that whatever one gets involved in, it's very important to maintain one's critical faculties.

It's a very good point.

And I've done that whatever I've done and, um, but at the same time, to value how Greenham developed my life how being there was a springboard for my life. And I've had um, a fab life actually, my children have suffered for it.

Really?

My children have suffered and I'd rather not talk about that. They've paid the price for my wonderful life. But no, I I just hope that my critical faculties never give them up, maintain a structure. And watch watch out for the tyranny of structureless-ness, yeah, and love each other.

All sounds very sensible to me.

(Laughs). Love is bloody hard. (Laughs).

Yes!

Let's just modify that from love each other, to try to see the good in each other, and accept each other, and not be judgmental. And forgive

me for being so judgmental about the woman that I have spoken badly of.

Alright, so let's get this extra story.

I just remembered after we finished - looking at your recording device. That one of the times when I was interviewed, I was interviewed by the BBC. So of course, I was rather keen to have a look. And you know how when you're on telly, the interviewer, you see the back of their head, and they're nodding and all that boring cutaway kind of shots.

Yeah.

So, you know, in real life, they asked me a particular question, and I answered it. And what went out on air was a completely different question.

Really?

So when I answered I looked a complete fool.

Really?

I looked an absolute fool. And I rushed around to a solicitor. Who are pretty low in my esteem - close to estate agents in my experience, but there's me being judgmental again! Rushed around to a solicitor and said wants to sue the BBC. And he said, 'How many millions of pounds have you got?' And he said, 'Because did you record it?' And I said, 'No, I didn't record it.' He said, 'That's why Tony Benn always carries a tape recorder with him.' Because it's been done to him.

Gosh!

It's not just me making it up. It's important to remember that news is a commodity that's bought and sold. And you have to ask yourself the question, why did they buy that piece of news from that news agency?

And what news haven't they bought? So once you've been caught like that, it really opens your eyes.

Yes. And then the press coverage of Greenham was, well, I mean, the stories were remarkably negative - in your experience?

Oh, yeah. Yeah. And one of the strangest things was, there was this lovely chap, you know, in the early days when we still had chaps there as-well. This lovely young man used to arrive regularly on his motorbike. And other than people like The Morning Star, who reported accurately, but you know, who's going to be reading the communist things?

(Laughs). Yeah!

And he, he was the only one that accurately reported, and that was with The Times, but that was before it been taken over, and who would have thought The Times actually reported accurately.

The pre-Murdock times.

Yeah, yeah.