

Angela and Raminder

Recorded 07 Nov 2021

Angela is coded as **A**, Raminder as **R**.

R: Alright, so Angela, we've talked about this before. For the purposes of the record, what we'll do is we'll have this conversation. And it'll take me a couple of weeks to get it into text form. What I do with everybody is I send them the original audio file and the transcript.

Original audio file, because it's the thing that has been said, and then they can check it against the transcript if they want to, to fill out anything, or if they feel that they've been misrepresented, then at least that way, we have a reference and we can kind of go, "alright, like, there's this something mistake here, and we need to fix that."

So with the transcript, I'll get it typed up, and then you'll get a copy of it. I think it's a good idea for everybody to have a look through and sort of see what they're happy with having in text because that is the matter of public record. Sometimes people, they get into a flow, and they say things that may not reflect particularly well on them, and they would rather not have in the public sphere and so they should probably seek to stop that from happening, but I won't be the one who's editing out the sensitive information, because the sensitive information in my view, is whatever the interviewee thinks it is. Yeah?

A: Agreed.

R: So that's how it goes. And then once I've got those, what I'll end up doing is, on the unedited transcript, I'll look for connections and stuff like that, I'll try to analyse the text, and write up what the kind of key trends are. I've yet to figure out how I'm going to do the write up, but I'll do that in due course, everybody will get a copy of it once I'm able to kind of figure out what format to run it in.

And the actual edited interview transcripts will end up as an appendix so that people can look into individual stories if that's something that they want to do. So that's the plan there. Let's see if I can pull it off. Now, the next thing is about names and stuff like that. Anonymity. Because I remember you filled in a logistics form and stuff like that. And I think you wanted your name withheld?

A: I don't know whether I did or not. Did I fill in a form?

R: Yeah

A: I don't remember!

R: It was a while ago—

A: I mean, I think Angela is fine. I don't necessarily want my full name.

R: Yeah, I mean, I actually don't think it looks as good on text to have full names anyway. Because some people do want their names withheld and others don't...And I always ask, why. So could you tell me why you're okay with that?

A: Why am I okay with it? Because I want to be real. Some people have all sorts of names on Twitter or wherever they are, and they want to be anonymous and I think that's okay too. But if I'm saying something real, I want to stand up for, you know, I want to be myself. And I'm, you know, I'm kind of brave enough to do that.

R: Okay, yeah. Because for whatever reason, there's a bit of a stigma around this sort of stuff isn't there. And some people feel that stigma a lot more acutely than others. I remember when I first wrote an article and went public with my own views, it's not it's not come back to bite me yet but it might do.

But there was that definite standing on the precipice going, "well, I'm putting all this vitriol on a page and I'm getting really worked up about this stuff, but I'm not really going over the parapet am I?"

And so I just decided that was that and I used my real name, and here we are. Alright, so you kind of know what's going on as well as I do now. So this is the schedule, and we'll just start.

So can you tell me a little bit about who you are in your own words? (A laughs)It's a very big question. I know.

A: Who am I? It's, well, it's a difficult one, because I guess each of us is a number of things. And I do have a day job, but I don't define myself by that. And, you know, for many years, I would have defined myself as a mother, first of all, but as my children are all adults, and I don't see very much of them now, I'm still a mother. But those particular years have gone and I guess I'm, "well, what am I?"

My serious side is, I'm an artist really, that's who I am. I may not do much of my art, but I am an artist. And I'm gabbling now.

R: No you're not.

A: No?

R: No. And actually, I think it's important for people to be as sincere, or indeed as guarded as they want to be. Because what they say and they don't say, also says something about them. Keep talking. Or indeed stop!

A: Yeah, I'm (pause) a woman. I'm a member of a family. I'm from a predominantly Jewish background, although not religious Jewish. That kind of informs my character, I think although when I was young, I had an argument with my brother about this. He said, I was Jewish. And I said, I wasn't. But I feel it now. I feel that connection to my ancestors quite strongly now.

What else am I? I don't know. I'm a friend, I'm somebody who likes to make connections, real connections with people. I'm not interested in small talk, the superfluous. I'm possibly rather too open for my own good, but that's who I am. And it's kind of take me or leave me now, really.

R: That is interesting. So yeah, there's a couple of things there. So we'll go through those in no particular order. So you mentioned you're from a Jewish background and as I understand it, being Jewish is defined by family lineage it it? It's as passed down through the maternal line. So while somebody may not be an observant Jew, that their mother was Jewish is enough.

A: Yes. There's another interesting point to make in terms of that, because three of my four grandparents were Jewish. My mother's mother was not Jewish.

R: OK,

A: So in the Jewish faith, she was not Jewish, and in the Christian faith, she was, so she had to become fully Jewish in order to marry my father in a synagogue, which she did. And then they didn't follow the faith particularly after that. So I am three quarters Jewish by birth, but it's not exactly not entirely through my mother.

R: So your mother's mother converted—

A: No, my mother converted completely because she was...my mother's father, my grandfather was Jewish. But my grandmother was not Jewish. So my mother had to convert, she, had the whole ceremony and the dunking in the water before she could get married to my father.

R: Isn't it as well...You're supposed to go to a Rabbi and they're supposed to discourage you, aren't they, because the difference between Jews and non Jews is that—

A: They're not looking for converts.

R: They're not looking for converts, but also Jews have to follow 600 odd commandments as symbolised by the thing that they wear, the straggly thing, whereas the gentiles only have to follow the seven commandments of Noah.

So the Rabbi as I understand it has to go, "well, why are you letting yourself in for this? You know, 613, seven [commandments], do the maths." But, yeah. So can you tell me a little bit more about your spiritual outlook, then?

A: Yeah. Interestingly for me, as a small child, I was talking about this yesterday, about how we had assemblies at school, and although I wasn't brought up in the Christian faith...I felt quite moved by prayer and hymns and the whole assembly that we had at school, and I think small children feel much more deeply than we imagine they do.

So I did believe in God and I did believe in all of what seemed to be going along with it. You know, I was very interested in the stories of Jesus and all of that, and the early Bible stories, so I must have had that sort of feeling, even though I wasn't a religious person.

Over the years, I've had a spiritual side to my nature, and I believe there is something more than we have in front of us here on Earth. I do believe there's something more than you and I sitting in this room, there's something else beyond this. And actually, the situation we find ourselves in now, it's come to me, quite strongly that there is a force of evil, there's definitely evil going on in the world and therefore, there is a force for good. So if that's God, then so be it. And I've become, in recent months, more inclined to believe in, and probably pray to that God, whatever that is, because I've become perhaps more inclined to be spiritual than, than ever, now.

R: It's strange, isn't it? Because in times like these, or in times of pressure, people do look to the beyond. They look outside themselves for refuge. Some find it in other people and others find it in the beyond, the divine.

A: I Think you can do both.

R: Yes, absolutely.

A: And I do.

R: Well, here we are (laughs). So in light of that then, the awareness of something beyond, can you tell me what your understanding of a human is? is a human a mere biological entity, or is it something beyond that? And if so, what is it?

A: It's very much something beyond that, very much so. And I think, I mean, the modern world throws at us, you know, ways of meeting people online, doesn't it, and this idea that you can see a photograph or even a little bit of video and hear somebody's voice and read their words, and you think you know them--It's only when you're actually physically in the same room, when you're in the presence of somebody, that you get the feeling for that person. That you get the...just a sense of who they are and that's much more than just a human form. It's much more than some photographs, or even a voice.

So there is something much more than just an entity, a human, a person. And I believe that there is something that, our bodies in a sense, are the house for whatever's inside us rather than the other way around. I think it's. And actually, I do have a memory of just before I was born, where I was at my mother's shoulder, and I remembered this as a child. And I was at my mother's shoulder and there were two other people in the room. I remember that she was on the right hand side of the bed wearing a peachy coloured night dress, and I thought to myself, "I must get in must get back into my body because I'm going to be born soon."

I mean, I remember having those thoughts. And my mother confirmed this when I was a child. She said "yes, there were two other people in the room and I was on the right hand side of the bed and I was wearing a peachy coloured nightdress." So whether that's just one of those odd things that happens and it means nothing more than just some sort of weird coincidence, I don't know. But that's a very strong memory for me. So, I have that feeling that we are more than just this body, this entity.

R: And it's informed by your own personal experience of being disembodied?

A: Yes, even my mother's-- I remember her telling me that she was walking along as a little girl with her cousin, and sat at a certain point, she could see them [mother and cousin] walking in front of her. And she, again, she obviously felt some sort of feeling of not being in her body and watching herself and her cousin walking ahead of her. So, yeah.

R: No, that is very interesting. And yeah, there's a certain issue in having just images of people, and there's a reason people prefer doing communication face to face. We could have done this online, but you would not be able to see the things I'm not saying. The gesticulation, my scratching down of the notes. The occasional aversion of my gaze as I need to think. They all inform an idea of a person, and they have been tossed aside too readily. That is my thinking.

A: I know a lot of people who don't even like to speak on the phone to somebody. And I'm a bit like that. I will speak on the phone, of course, but I much prefer face to face communication, always. It's much better for me.

R: Yeah, I think a lot of people are of that bent. And actually, for me, I text people, because that's complete disembodiment. So that's fine. Yeah, the only reason I'll sort of take to remote is if I physically can't get somewhere. Because, you know, it's more than just the sum of--you can't just dial into somebody, to be there requires some degree of material effort, and sometimes that's a bit more than your resources.

And so, having had an experience of the “other,” the outside, and finding yourself in what is essentially a very morally polarising situation, Where do you believe our, or your understanding of right and wrong comes from?

A: It's a very good question, actually. Because the the instinct is to say it's from how you were taught as a child and and of course, that must be part of it. I remember being very strongly...quite puzzled and upset when there was an accident at school where the teacher shut a window on my finger and obviously, it hurt and my mum came and it was all sorted out, and I've survived to this day. But at the time, I can remember thinking: “she'd never said sorry to me.”

And I was taught you were supposed to apologise if you'd done something to hurt somebody. So I had a very strong sense that we should be accountable for our actions, that we should be thoughtful and kind. And I was probably taught actually, to be too much of a good little girl. I, to this day, I wouldn't go into somebody's house and pick a book off the shelf, unless they said to me, “Oh, would you get that book for me?”

R: I'm quite similar.

A: Yeah, because I was brought up not to touch things in other people's homes, whereas I've got friends who would come here and they would do that, and I quite like that they would do that. You know, I don't mind it at all, but I have to be invited to do that because I was taught and I suppose I've always been that way.

So, right and wrong: It's very difficult when you come from a family like mine, which had a lot of problems and there were, you know family breakups. My parents separated three times throughout my childhood. So...[an] awful lot of stuff went on, stuff where I was being told one thing but I'd witnessed or overheard something different. So on the one hand, you're taught to be truthful and on the other hand, you're hearing lies. So that's quite difficult for a child I think.

But I think yes, I think my parents did teach me to be a decent human being, but I think you can, as a mother, myself, having three children, you can teach the same thing to three different individuals, and

they all behave differently. So I think it comes from somewhere in your character before you even get taught anything. So I think we bring with us far more than we imagined.

R: Yeah, because I one previous conversation, You were one of the Greenham woman weren't you?

A: Yes I was! (laughs), I didn't stay there, I was in a women's group and we went there a couple of times for the day, we were daytrippers. So we were a bit. Yeah. But yes, I did go.

R: Okay, so you just mentioned that being kind and being thoughtful, these are the things that are right and wrong. So can you elaborate on that a little bit?

A: Being kind and thoughtful?

R: Well, what is right and wrong to you? Because we've kind of talked about where it comes from, but what is it? What is the right and the wrong thing?

A: Tricky, isn't it? I think. I, I'm a bit of a funny mix, because I think I've always been somebody, and probably less so now, but somebody that would always try to not hurt somebody's feelings, I wouldn't, I wouldn't take something from them. I wouldn't harm them. Not knowingly. And at the same time, I could open my mouth and put my foot in it, you know, I'm that sort of funny mix of somebody who tries very hard not to...I wouldn't want to be unkind to anybody.

But then I look back at my childhood, you know, there were times where I think actually, the way I behaved, with other children at times wasn't always very nice, you know, I think probably because of my own background, and you know and there's a lot more nowadays, where children are taken more seriously than, you know, when parents split up, the needs of the children are taken into account and listened to, and their behaviours are monitored and probably, challenged.

But looking back, I think I, I was not a perfect child by any means. You know, sometimes I was probably quite unkind without even thinking I was being unkind to other children. And it was possibly because of what was happening at home. I don't know. I mean, that's an excuse, perhaps. Who knows.

R: I suppose the difficulty with children is, though...their moral compasses isn't really formed. They say all the time, don't they that kids "don't know any better."

A: I mean, there is a school of thought that says that we shouldn't put huge numbers of children together in schools, because it's not natural for [a] large quantity of children to be just with other

children. In more natural societies, they would have older people, they'd have teenagers, they'd have grandmothers, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, friends, of all sorts of ages, influencing them, and being around them, whereas now we kind of shove them all into a playground together and expect them to behave well and somehow or other, manage that.

R: And indeed, at the very early stages of a child's life, that's kind of how it starts. Before before a child goes to school, that's exactly what happens, people of all ages descend and engage.

A: Yeah and I think that's much more natural, actually, when we think about it.

R: Yeah, it does stack up. I think you're right. Certainly, I think in the friendships I've carried in my adult life, they're kind of across generations, I don't really see the age boundary and quite a good deal of my friends are older than I am.

A: I think that's interesting, though, isn't it? Because I'm the same. I've got young friends, old friends and "people in between" friends. I remember talking to somebody, it was actually a work colleague over a video call and he said--because I work with elderly people, and he was saying, "oh of course I wouldn't, I wouldn't have a friend in their 60s, because I'm only 40 or something." And I thought, "oh, 1) I thought he was a lot older," because he seemed a lot older. And 2), I thought well, "here are you and I having a quite a nice conversation, and I'm that much older than you and I am in my 60s, and you're, you're kind of discarding people based on their age, because you didn't actually know that that's my age, probably."

So it's interesting, isn't it? How people will categorise others and say, "I couldn't possibly have friends at that age."

R: I think a lot of that is also fear of social stigma because friendships with large age groups, when we're-- told to look at them a little weirdly, look at them a little askance. One of my best mates she was born in '53, so she's 68 odd? So she's my best mates mum, and, you know--

A: You're friends.

R: Yeah, great vibe and that.

A: That's because you're an old soul, probably.

R: I have heard that term floated and [you're] probably right. I mean I mean, we hang out and she gave me a lot of kind of career advice and stuff like that, because she'd been through it. You know, she'd been through every level of the corporate wringer. She had a lot of interesting things to say. Still does.

But I can understand that being...some people who are more concerned with their own self image, might not like to be seen in public with those people. And so on, so forth.

So, in regards to that then, are you more comfortable in groups, or on your own?

A: Well, funnily enough, this situation...I was laughing with a friend about it a few weeks ago, I feel like we've formed kind of groups based on our freedoms, for people who are not group people. A lot of the people I meet are not really people who would naturally be in groups. So I'm, I'd say, I'm a sociable person, but I'm happy in my own space as well. I often prefer one to one or actually quite often comfortable in a three, but that's possibly because I'm one of three in my siblings. So I don't know whether that's why but I quite like a three, you know, because I think the focus is less on me, then. You know what I mean? So I'm happy in groups, but I don't need to be with a group all the time. So I'm one of those sort of people who's a bit of a mixture.

R: It's actually very interesting that you said that, because, yeah, there's a lot of people who are not group people who have actually, there's more people who are not group people that I've interviewed than there are. Yeah, ...I'm going to have to elaborate on that. Because it nails it, it nails it. It's true. I can't say anything more than that.

A lot of what we're seeing here as well has been driven by sort of social ostracism, social stigma, kind of the lockdown, vaccine passport ideology. It's the fear of sticking out. And you've also mentioned that you've kind of cast off the shackles of others' approval to some degree. So could you tell me a little bit about, you know, what your experience of social ostracism would be like?

Let's say you weren't invited to a party, you know, you've got a group of friends and stuff like that. And I mean, you found out that you've been sidelined? What would that sort of feel to you? And how has that changed, if applicable?

A: It has happened to me. It's happened to me on many occasions, actually before all of this. Because I've, I've never quite fitted in and I think that's a conversation I've had with a lot of people on this side of the argument, is that they've always felt they weren't quite the same as other people. So I think I was naive enough to think that in a group situation where you might be going for coffee with a bunch of friends, that we'd have a conversation. But what what I've often found is that the conversation is not really a conversation, in as much as ...somebody says something and everybody agrees.

And I'm just not that person. I might agree, and in which case, I would say so, but I might say something else. But instead of that sparking debate, that quite often sets you apart, and it has done with me. And what I found when my relationship with my children's father ended, was that rather than being invited to more things, I was invited to less things. So if people were having a dinner party, which might have been nice to go to because they were couples and I wasn't in a couple, I didn't get invited, I would see pictures on Facebook of groups of people getting together. And I just been left out.

So it did hurt. Actually, I did find that hurtful. I pretended it didn't. But it did. There's no question. So I have been kind of left out of things in the past...and also, if you've always been the person who's not quite like everybody else, you're not going to be the the hit with everybody. You're not going to be the one of the "cool people," as my children always said, they were never the cool ones at school. I don't know whether they were or not, but I certainly wasn't.

So I've, I've sort of grown up with a feeling of not being one of the most popular kids, or, as an adult, one of the most popular people and I've had my moments where I've had groups of people who I've found really quite like me and now actually, I've found quite a lot of people who I get on very well with in this new world we find ourselves in. Although obviously, in my work life. I've been left out of things more recently, because I won't take medical tests to prove that I don't have an illness when I'm perfectly healthy. Yeah, it's, it's difficult.

R Yeah, certainly with conversations, there's always been something a little bit off about them with me, because I actually only found about the way a conversation works a couple of years ago, because people have classified it. Maybe this ties into my love of putting things into boxes.

But there's something called a "shift response" and a "support response." And people often make shift responses in conversation. So if you're saying something about your car breaking down, I would make a shift response and say, "Yeah, well, my car broke down too." And it shifts the focus from you to me, because now we're talking about me. People do that quite a lot. And I always found that a bit bothersome. And I started to actually think conversations such as these are quite rare because people, as a rule, do not take the time to really sit down and listen to somebody. That's just not the thing that people do and I'm as guilty of it as anybody else.

So you've kind of hinted about family dysfunction. And you've you've talked about, you know, certain things from childhood experience, and how they've kind of contributed to how you present yourself to the world today. So can you describe your family situation at present? You know, first off, who you live with? I know the answer's nobody but for the sake of the tape, what is the relation with your sort of family unit is like, and has it changed since this?

A: Yes, I live alone. And I've lived alone since my youngest son went to university about six years ago. And yeah, the thing for me is it's a bit more complicated than the situation we find ourselves in now. When I separated from their father, we were not married, but we were together for 27 years. I did so

because I was helped, shall we say, to understand that there'd been a level of coercive control in the relationship and so it broke down very rapidly.

At that point, I think I was traumatised, my children were traumatised and they kind of withdrew from me. I don't know whether they withdrew from their father because they didn't really discuss it with me. In fact, since that time, they've never really discussed their relationship with him, with me at all, even though I've hoped they would really.

So there was a level of shall we say, disconnect at that point, which has persisted. And although my youngest son was still young enough to live with me and we had a sort of connection because of that, and, you know, I was, I was always there for him, he was at an age in his young teenage years where, you know, parents are less important than they might be. So yeah, so my, my children I felt at that point, even though I'd been a very committed and I decided to as a mother, because I lost my own mother, when I was 22, that I was going to be a full time mother, while they needed it, and I would put my own needs for a creative life on hold. And I don't regret doing that.

And I think I did a pretty good job. And I know that my daughter said to my sister, she's never said it to me, that she felt she had a perfect childhood, which, you know, was pretty much down to what I did. She would never say that to me, or she hasn't done. However, at that point, my daughter withdrew from me quite a long way. She also went to work for her father.

R: At the time of the split?

A: Yeah, yeah. So that didn't help. I think my other sons withdrew, because they were feeling hurt, and I guess people said to me, "Oh, they will come round, they will, you know, they will start to talk to you, and it will be alright." But I'd say it hasn't been all right, and we've had our moments, and they've never, they've never said anything to me. In fact, I'd sometimes wish that they would actually shout at me and say, "Mother, You shouldn't have done this, or why didn't you tell us that," or whatever it is. So that had already happened really prior to this.

My oldest son has been the most forthcoming, shall we say, and in fact, he, he has similar views to me about the current situation, so e've not lost that. In fact, obviously, he's a grown man. And I think we have a pretty good mother and son relationship now. I think it's as good as I'd like it to be. I mean, I'd love to see more of him, obviously. My daughter, I saw her recently, but I hadn't seen her for over two years. Because she was always too busy, she was being obedient in the circumstances we found ourselves in last year, so she wouldn't break the rules.

And my younger son has had his own problems, which I won't elaborate upon. But although I've seen him once this year, he doesn't really want to see me. And I think my daughter, I don't know whether she wants to see me or not, but she doesn't seem to at the moment. So it's tricky, and I think it's partly due to my views. My brother has switched off. He hasn't been horrible to me, but he doesn't make any effort towards me.

My sister does [make an effort], she's still okay. And my niece is delightful still. So as the only one, well, myself and my oldest son are the only two on this side of things. We're okay, everybody else, it's sort of a bit of a shifting scale of how okay, they are. I haven't fallen out with anyone in my family, like so many others have. Friends I had before this have kind of fallen by the wayside. One or two people I knew slightly before, have come to the fore. But I've made, I'd say, more friends in this last year than I would ever have dreamed of really. I mean, and people that I can really connect with and talk to. I mean, that's been the major success for me of this year. It's been fantastic in that sense.

And the situation has made me feel more alive and more real in many ways, although it's I'd rather we didn't have it, but it definitely. I mean, people talk about being woken up, but I feel there's a certain sense of destiny, a certain sense of "I'm here for this time."

R: There's certainly a feeling of fighting for your right to be real, to not be disembodied and catalogued, and so on, so forth. Yeah. I certainly think is acute...I generally don't really care about anything, right. That's just not how I am, but apparently this has really touched a nerve and we are where we are.

So you talked about withdrawal and the withdrawal...so this was around the time of separation from your the father of your children and it's been compounded, in part because of this thing. If you feel comfortable, can you tell me more about the coercive control? Or is that something that you'd rather not go into?

A: Well, I didn't know about it, obviously, a lot of people who are being controlled don't know about it. And it was only in the very last stages, because I, you know, I thought I was in a very happy relationship. But when I look back, there were pointers and clues throughout. That I should have, well, I wish I'd taken notice of.

I lived with low level or more depression throughout those years than I would like. And I felt like...I wasn't very bright, I felt I wasn't very attractive. I felt I wasn't very, well, worthy really. And I thought that he was all of those things. And it was me that was the dull, boring woman at home. That's not to say I didn't have opinions, you would have thought we were a fairly well matched couple. I think we seemed that way. But he was living a lie. He was probably-- I discovered things about him and what he'd been doing in those years that I won't discuss here, but were not the person he pretended to be, if you know what I mean.

He was not the person he said he was, and it was it was kind of towards the end where his behaviour had become much more erratic and I started to become fearful of him, that I started to question it. And in the end, he started to say things to me, like, "I'd like you to get rid of your car." Or "I want you to stop wearing makeup," or things like that. And this, this rang a bell. I mean, I started thinking, "why is this then" you know, "why?" And "what business is it of his? I mean, I'm not going to do those things."

But it started to make me question things. And he definitely tried to put people down in my eyes. So he would, he would try to say things about my family or my friends that would put me off them. And in fact, after we separated people came forward and said, they always felt he made them feel small. Or they they actually said to me that they they thought he must be okay, because I was with him, rather than the other way around.

So that was very interesting. But for me more interesting, was that when this came up last year, when this whole business started, it brought back those feelings of manipulation and kind of saying one thing and then another and I started to feel those feelings again. So it actually, looking back on it now, I feel that that was almost like my prepping for this time.

It was almost like I had to go through that in order to be the person I am who can manage and deal with and get through what we're going through now. Because I don't think the person I was then would have been strong enough. If that makes some sense/

R: No, it does. Moments of distrust then, you know, you're talking about kind of creeping sense of...a creeping distrust and that kind of incoming scepticism. Yeah, so there's a couple of things I kind of want to branch off into there. So would you say that kind of that initial sort of sense of being distrustful of somebody is something that informed your view of how the messaging of this pandemic was being handled?

And I'm thinking particularly with regards to the news, you know, I'm interested in hearing where you got your news from and how that's changed. And if so, was this sort of sense of distrust seeded from the media itself, or from previous experience?

A: I've recently cancelled my TV licence, because there's no way on earth am I going to listen to any more from the BBC. When this started, like most people I know, I sat and listened to the five o'clock broadcasts with everybody that our prime minister and his cohort started with and I went along with it. I thought: "Right, I need to know what we're supposed to be doing and I need to hear what they're doing about it."

And I questioned the whole thing from the beginning, because I can remember thinking, I remember having a conversation with a friend late one night before we locked down, before all that, this friend was saying, "we're going to do that." And I said, "we won't do that here because that will just destroy the economy. I'm sure, we'll just look after the elderly and the vulnerable."

I believed it was a thing, a, pandemic. And then when it happened, I thought, "well, it's only these three weeks or whatever it was to flatten the curve," or whatever they said at that time. And I thought, I can remember thinking, "how am I going to manage for three weeks completely on my own?" Because I wasn't going to be going into work, I was going to be working from home, and not seeing anyone. And obviously, it wasn't just for three weeks.

So quite early on, I was questioning why they were doing things the way they were doing them, and I became increasingly irritated by it, the standing outside the supermarket on, you know, a dot on the pavement where you were six feet apart from somebody else and in the first lockdown, no masks, but you know, there was no, there didn't seem to be any logic to it.

I think what happened...I wasn't a distrusting sort of person, so...I started to question at the end of my relationship with my children's father and then obviously, I lost all trust in him, but it was a it was a very-- it happened quite quickly. I'm not naturally suspicious, in fact, people said to me, "Oh, you'll never trust a man again." And I said "Well, I will, because most people aren't like that," you know, most people aren't manipulative and, you know, behaving like that.

I mean, I realised now there's quite a lot of people like that in governments and the media and, you know, places of power, who behave like that. But I would say most people are not like that. But...it definitely brought back those feelings as it went on, and I suppose I do question things I do look beneath the surface of things now. So, you know--because I'm the sort of person that if I say to you, "it's lovely to see you," or "I'd love to see you again soon" or, I mean that, whereas other people, I realise don't necessarily mean the same thing. They just saying it because that's what you say.

And it's taken me a long time to realise that the penny has dropped. That people will say things they don't mean for no-- I don't see any point personally, but they do. So I do try to look behind what's being said and see why they're saying it and what it means, and I don't get my news that way now, I get my news from all sorts of alternatives. Richie Allen show, big favourite. I'm a huge fan of his work because I trust him.

I've become a fan of Twitter--

R: Oh dear God.

A: Well, I tweet a lot. And I read things because I'm actually interested in the way the thinking is going, and it's very instant. I like that aspect of it. I didn't like it, and I was only on Twitter briefly 10, 12 years ago, and I came off, but it was, it was last year I went back on it, because a friend said he'd tweet my picture of one of my pet portraits, a dog portrait.

That sounds like one of these naff portrait things, but a dog painting. And so I went back on for that reason and then I started to find that people were saying interesting things. So yes, you could sort of go "Dear God, Twitter, yuck," but actually, I've had some really interesting conversations with people on there, So I do find, and I think if I can actually tweet something that somebody finds useful, for me, that's quite valuable.

And it does happen. I can see, you know, people thank me or I thank them, or, so there are some interesting, informative and uplifting things that happen on there as well as a lot of dross, which I ignore. So news wise, where else do I get news from? Friends point me to things and I listen to UK column occasionally. What else? All sorts of other people actually around the world that broadcast, Max Igan, whatever he is, various people around the world who tell it how it is around the world, and I come

across them in all sorts of ways, but not via the mainstream media. I don't even listen to any of it. I just can't anymore.

R: And again, that's been a thing that's just happened through the situation as it's evolved?

A: Yeah.

R: Okay. And a lot of it was because of how long it was going on for and I'm kind of thinking, it sounds like a lot of the real world experience that you had, was kind of feeling into the frustration of watching the news. Is that a fair statement to make? Is that correct?

A: Well, no, because I just stopped believing that what they were saying. It was all propaganda, it wasn't proper journalism, and I didn't trust them anymore. And I'm somebody who would, the thing is, I'm somebody who would, if there was a real pandemic, and people's lives are at risk, I would follow the rules, I would do what was necessary to protect other people. And I would do them willingly. You know, I am somebody who can defer gratification, in the sense that a lot of people would, "oh, I want my holidays, I'm going to get two jabs."

That wouldn't be me at all. I would, I'm happy if they said, you know, "we've got this terrible situation, you won't be able to have a holiday for five years, but it will be alright in the end, if you follow these rules," I would be happy to do that if there was something real, to follow the rules for. So I'm actually I'm not somebody who would naturally want to go against the law or do anything that could possibly harm anyone else.

So now I find myself being accused by people of being completely selfish, "or not their kind of person" I've had said to me, or somebody that they just don't want to be anywhere near them. This is in my working life. And I think: "if you knew actually how much I cared about your health and well being you would not say those things to me." So it's a funny old world, really.

R: So can you tell me a little bit more about your working situation then?

A: Yeah, I manage a development of retirement apartments, where people live independent lives and part of my role is to-- there's no care given and I don't have any responsibility for them in that sense, except it's more of a kind of an overseeing of their safety, their well being and keeping a bit of an eye on them, arranging social activities, encouraging friendships, making sure that things that need to be done around the place get done, and generally, sort of understanding a little bit about them, and..../ befriending them really. I love that aspect of it, or I have done although, now, things have changed quite dramatically, so I'm aware that a number of people, you know, wobble backwards when they see me approach because they're frightened, you know, they're frightened of catching something from somebody who's perfectly healthy.

And that to me ...I feel very angry on their behalf, that they've, at the stage in their life where they should be relaxing and enjoying the years they have left, they've been put into this awful position of being so frightened that they, they're not living at all really some of them.

So yeah, and some of those people have discovered that I'm, obviously, somebody who hasn't been vaccinated and therefore, that has caused them to become hostile towards me. Not everybody. I mean, it's a minority, but that hasn't had an impact on my well being at work, and I'm a bit of a lone voice in that at work, I have to say.

R: Okay. So it's important to define what we're talking about, because we've kind of discussed the situation, in its abstract, and we kind of know intuitively what "it" is, and what "the thing" that we're supposed to be responding to is, but definitions are important. So can you please define COVID for me? And can you also define a lockdown? Like, well, when I use those words, what do you understand by those words?

A: COVID, I'm one of those people who believes that they came up with a scary sounding name for what possibly is a virus, or may not really be anything at all, I think that it is a bio weapon, personally. I think it has been created to cause fear, and the agenda is a depopulation agenda, nothing to do with a virus. So you can call it what you like, but I don't really believe in it.

A lockdown: The first one was different from others I think. It's hard to remember them really now because it's all it's all gone blurred into one in some ways, but the first one was one where you were really encouraged not to even leave your house, weren't you? In fact, that was the point at which I started to do a morning walk (laughs), because there's a bit of me that will not tolerate being told what to do when there's no good reason for it.

Like I said before, if there had been a very good reason for it, I would have gone with it, and I would have done my bit. But I thought for my own sanity, I needed to get some fresh air and exercise and I did it. and I've continued to do that every workday morning at least, before breakfast. But in that first lockdown for me, was just sort of, it was weird, really, because the high street was empty, if you ever went to the high street, people weren't out in their cars, so everywhere was much quieter. There was a certain stillness about and it all felt very strange, but we thought it was a temporary thing, so we kind of went with it.

So lockdown for me is just preventing you from doing the things that you might want to do. And although in a sense it didn't make a huge difference to my life in as much as I wasn't somebody that travelled and I wasn't somebody that had to go anywhere, particularly for work or visiting people very often, so those things didn't change very much for me, but it was just knowing that you have no choice about it, that felt weird.

In fact, I was even given a letter from the company I work for, that I could keep in my car in case I was stopped by the police, so I could be seen as a key worker and that felt strange in itself really, because that felt like something out of the war years really, where you would be having to show your papers to prove you're allowed out. So lockdown, what is a lockdown? I don't quite know what the question is about the lockdown, what does it mean? what do I think?

R: Well, when when somebody uses the word lockdown, is it mandatory business closure, is it you know, not being allowed to leave your home? Literally the kind of boots and braces. Yeah, what is it?

A: Yeah, I guess it's all of that, isn't it? And then they did...they came up with all sorts of buzz phrases and tier systems and bubbles and God knows what, all of which seemed like so last year now, don't they? In fact, have a friend this year said something about being in a bubble with his girlfriend and I said, I wanted to say "that's so last year, I'm sure bubbles aren't a thing anymore, are they?"

It's a bit like sort of fashions in clothing. It's sort of, it's all a nonsense. I guess people are now talking about another lockdown coming, and I don't know what that would mean. But they varied a little haven't they, the lockdowns? Because by the next lockdown, I think we were all in masks, weren't we? Or people wearing masks and things? So that was added to the mix.

R: That's correct, Yes. And then what about the new normal?

A: (laughs) I rail against it. Because I don't want to be part of a new normal, although I realise that we're never going back to the way things were exactly. I don't think we can. On a good day, I think we're going to go into something much better, much more real. People will appreciate each other more and what they have in terms of real things rather than superficiality and stuff, if you like. I hope that's the way it will go.

The New Normal seems to include people hand sanitising at every opportunity, and wrapping a mask around their face still even when they've been told they don't need to wear one. So that seems to be a thing that's carried on persisted. And I don't do any of that. I did. In the early days when I didn't understand that I had a choice, I'd go into the supermarket for 15 minutes and put a mask on and whip it off as I left the shop. But then when I realised I had a choice, I stopped wearing one and haven't worn one since.

I don't hand sanitise, I never did, I did the whole "pretend to hand sanitise" occasionally when I was less confident, but no, I wouldn't do any of that. But that seems to be the new normal. [It] is about keeping your distance from people and people will still cross the road, which I find unbelievably well, just unexplainable really. I don't know what they think they're doing to, you know, they see you coming in

one direction and they cross the road ,out of politeness or because they they've just become habituated to it. I don't know.

So the new normal seems to be about a kind of an OCD existence, which I won't be part of.

R: Okay. So you know, you talk about the early days of the lockdown measures and the higher compliance for the first few weeks, certainly. So, when BoJo on the 23rd of March 2020, said “you must stay at home,” what was your initial reaction to that statement being made in peacetime?

A: As I said before, I thought: “right, I'm going out for a walk every day.” So I wasn't going to stay in the house. My initial reaction was, “he must be saying this for a good reason.” I really believed it must be for a good reason. So I thought, “right, this is what we have to do, these men [are] smartly dressed, well as smart as he ever gets.” I've never liked him and I've never trusted the man I've never found him funny.

So, you know, I wasn't particularly impressed with him from the get go. But I did think, “right, we have to do this because there is something here that we need to do to stop the NHS becoming overwhelmed.” It made some sort of sense, so that was my initial reaction, even though I didn't really like it. Yeah, that was what I thought I should do. And I did.

R: So what about wider disruption to your life, I mean you talk about the morning walk, but it sounds like you were still going to work and--

A: Well, I was working from home. I was able to do the job I do from home, I had to go in once a week for safety checks and things which was supposed to take an hour or so, but of course, I had lots of people wanting to see me about this and that, so I was often there for a whole morning. The rest of the week, I was working from home and I did work from home from nine till four like I always do, but it was very warm weather as well. It was unseasonably warm, so that made it better because I could sit in the garden and work. You know, it was nice.

And I think in some ways, I think a lot of people, probably myself included, quite enjoyed the break from having to go into the place of work. Yeah, I found the job more difficult because it meant instead of speaking to people and seeing them and and working out whether they were okay or not, I had to speak to them on the phone, and I'm not great on the phone. I don't really like making phone calls.

But every day, I was obliged to ring everybody to make sure they were okay, and just have a bit of a chat with them. That was part of my job, during that time. So, yes, it wasn't easy doing the job from home, because in amongst what we were doing, we also had to be seen to be doing it. So we had to fill in all sorts of things to show that we were actually doing the work we were given to do. Because instead of just trusting that we would do it, we have to be seen to be doing it. If you see what I mean.

R: I see what you mean, because the power of observation's gone if you're not down the office.

A: Well, the funny thing is nobody observes me when I'm there anyway, because there's just me working there...But I suppose their view was that the people who live there could say, "well, why are we paying for somebody who's not here?" And they could point to what I was actually doing. So I think that was why they had to do that.

R: So what about your view on others' responses to the measures across time, so not just in three weeks, but across all of this, right to where we are now. How do you see others' reaction to this stuff? You've pointed out to some degree, the absurdity that you're seeing with hand sanitizer and masking. Could you go into that in a little bit more detail for me?

A: Yeah, I mean, in my work life, it's become something that I've found quite difficult, because there've been all sorts of weird and wonderful rules that they've come up with. So, for example, if a salesperson comes to the site to show someone around an apartment, they're obliged to and I think this is sort of drifted now, because things have changed, but they were obliged to sanitise "touch points," whatever they are in the apartment before the visit, open windows and then sanitise those same touch points when the visitor left.

We had to let the people who lived in other apartments know that somebody was coming to the development, so they could hide in their apartment if necessary. In fact, there was a point at which they, they tried to suggest that I should tell people they had to stay in their apartments because of a visit and I pointed out that-- or that they could go out for the whole day. So I pointed out that if I've got a 91 year old who wants to go out for a walk, I'm certainly not going to stop her. And I'm not going to say to her, "you've got to stay out for the whole day, because we've got somebody visiting."

So there were various weird and wonderful rules they came up with and they tied themselves up in knots with really. And they've come and gone a bit, but there's still a kind of a culture of weekly testing and offering of vaccinations via the company, which is all done very nicely. And now we're being offered flu vaccinations as well, so it's sort of it's, it's sort of never ending this kind of world of "nobody's well," and, you know, you're never going to have anybody who's just normally well, you've got to have vaccinations, you've got to test, any any symptom you have, could be seen as a symptom of a terrible virus.

A headache I had one afternoon, which had gone by the evening, was seen the next day as possibly a symptom of the latest version of the virus. And even my saying, "I'm absolutely fine and well," was not enough. So I had to then have 10 days away from the work place, which was a nonsense. So I worked from home, which I didn't have to do. They hadn't asked me to, in fact they told me I didn't need to, but I'm conscientious enough to actually feel like it was important for me to carry on working.

R: Yeah. And so you've seen it as a dividing agent, you've seen it kind of expose the degree of neurosis in other people. Okay. Now, before we move on, then, so you mentioned about the virus as bioweapon, as an agent of depopulation agenda, can you tell me a little bit more about what informs your reading of that, and where it's kind of coming from?

A: I've done more research, I'd say in the last year and a half, than I've done in the rest of my life, put together probably. And I did listen to and read, what I now would see as the mainstream view, the view that most people would hold, and I just couldn't go along with it, it just didn't ring true for me. So I started to look at look more widely and I've listened to experts. Throughout my life, I've never gone for anything, in terms of treatments or advice, unless I know that I can trust the source. And I've done it this time. I've listened to all sorts of people, I've read things. And I've come to conclusions based on what seems to be very sensible people with a lot of experience in particular fields, who actually say things that make a lot of sense to me.

So, lawyer Anna DeBuisseret, for example, who has a huge range of experience in the military as a lawyer and in other fields, it is her view and the view of a number of other scientists who are not paid by the media, who are not involved in the production of these vaccinations, who have said things that make a lot of sense to me. So Dr Mike Yeadon and various others. And I can see that there is a I mean...if you look at the World Economic Forum's website, I mean, it's there in plain sight. They tell you what their agenda is. We won't let them do it. We won't let them have their way.

But there's definitely-- none of this is about health. I mean, it's just laughable that people would believe it is.

R: And yet they do.

A: They do. And I I don't blame them for it. I think a lot of people do [blame them]. I don't blame them because I don't think I don't think they can help what's happened to them. I think they have been completely, to say they've been hypnotised or brainwashed sounds a bit daft but they have. This has seeped into their brains and somehow or other they've been led to believe, completely the opposite of what's really happening. And I don't know how we get around that. I don't know what we do to wake them up out of that, and I don't know whether we can.

...I mean, there are children dying from these, after these injections now, in this country. There have been more deaths and injuries from this one experimental injection than I think it's something like 20 years of previous vaccines put together.

R: There's been yeah, there's been something doing the rounds of the VAERS reporting systems and the yellow card showing a massive spike, yes.

A: It makes no sense to me that people think it's, it should be mandatory, and mandatory does not mean law, but that it should be mandatory or made law that everybody should take an experimental injection, which it is. I mean, it's in trials till 2023. So it's become hysterical, actually. People have become absolutely hysterical about it.

R: Well, this is going to segue quite nicely into another thing I wanted to ask you, which was your opinion on the current vaccination drive and the messaging surrounding it, because it certainly seems very different than any other vaccination campaign that I've been --

A: Has there ever been one quite like this? "No," is the answer.

R: There's been mass vaccinations through the years, so meningitis could count as a mass vaccination campaign.

A: But it wasn't mandatory.

R: No.

A: I don't mind them offering something and the suggestion at the beginning was that's what they were going to do. And I can remember thinking, "well, if they come up with a vaccine, and the elderly get it, and they feel better," I would never have taken it anyway. I'm what they would describe as an "anti Vaxxer." I don't mind if you take one. I hardly gave my children any, and I did have some disapproval from one or two other mothers. I remember when my children were young. And my youngest son didn't have any. And he also didn't have any childhood illnesses at all.

In fact, he was very grumpy with me in recent years and said, "I never had Calpol mother, I was a deprived child." Because he was never ill. So it's, it's a personal decision, whether you want to take a vaccination, as far as I'm concerned, if you want to. However, I do believe that people should have informed consent and I don't, in this instance believe that they can give informed consent because they don't know: A) they don't know, necessarily what's in the vial or the serum or whatever, this has never been done before, it's a very new kind of treatment.

Even if you do get to see the instructions that come with the Pfizer vaccine, which people don't get to see till afterwards I think, or if they do see them at all, that says that you may be allergic to one or more of the ingredients and nobody has any kind of safety testing, to make sure they're not going to be allergic to any of the ingredients. But that's you know, if people want to take it, then that's entirely up to them, I wouldn't recommend it. But then I would have been somebody who, right from the beginning, whatever the benefits were, I would not have taken it. So that's my personal choice. But it started off

being something for the elderly and has become absolutely everywhere, being forced, being coerced, being nudged, to take it at every opportunity. They're pushing and they're threatening us now. And that isn't for anybody's health.

R: The levels of coercion are something very, new. And so can you tell me a little bit more about your take on vaccination as act in itself then? You mentioned that you would wear that term “anti Vaxxer.” I think it's quite a loaded term, but--

A: yes, I would be described as that, but I, that's not something I would say about myself. I just say, you see, I've not been somebody since my very early 20s, who would take any kind of medication if I could possibly avoid it. So out of everybody I know, I would say that I've taken the least medication. I had an illness about 4 years ago, 5, 4 and 1/2 years ago, which meant I did have to take some medication, and I was very unhappy about doing so.

And I mitigated that by having herbal medication to assist with that, and I changed my diet at the time to help with it and I came off the medication much sooner with better results than the medical profession were expecting. So prior to that, I hadn't had any medication for donkey's years. So it's just been something since my early 20s, which I've avoided, and that was, during my mother's final illness, I learned a lot then, which, which informed my way of thinking really,

R: And so that also just expands to vaccinations? So vaccination is treated in--

A: Well, for me, it's about putting things into your body that aren't natural and avoiding that where possible. I'd just rather avoid it and that's my choice. Other people choose differently. I don't live on pot noodles, but you can if you want to.

R: One of the madnesses of all of this has been the messaging right? The sort of “stay home, stay safe, look him in the eyes” type thing. Again, you've alluded to what it's led people to do in your experience, but what's your kind of...where you stand on the pandemic messaging? Regardless of whether you believe there's a pandemic or not, there's definitely been messaging, and what's your opinion on the messaging and how it's been executed?

A: It makes me angry actually. Because, you know, I used to, for example, I used to be a big fan of Coronation Street and I watched it since childhood. I no longer watch it, because I couldn't bear the incidental posters, the masks, the mention...for me, I just didn't want to hear it. I don't want it. I don't need it, if I've chosen that path then fair enough. But I think it's dangerous, I think...it's unnecessary at best, but it's actually sinister, at worst.

And I, I don't want to see it everywhere, I don't want to go to the supermarket and say, see, even now you have notices, which sort of say things like, you know, this suggesting that you might like to wear a mask still because it's sort of everybody's safety and well being well, I'm sorry. It's the opposite of that.

It doesn't make me feel safe. It makes me feel anxious. It makes me feel sad to see people looking so frightened from behind their masks or subservient actually. It's made some people apologetic and subservient and can't look you in the eye or they're withdrawn. And it's just horrible. Actually. It's just awful, what it's done to people,

R: The masks have most certainly been one of the most acrimonious bits of all of the stuff. You know, you will not find somebody on any side of the argument, who does not have an opinion on masks. And, yeah, you've mentioned certainly your perspective on them, which is, I think, fair to say fairly against.

And I'm sure that there's others for which this project is not within the scope of who are pro. And so was that something that you would sort of say, that's where the mask begins and ends. It's to propagate the fear and it is to make people subservient. Is that is that your read on the mask?

A: Yeah, I think the mask is to remind us to be afraid. I think it's there to remind us to be fearful because, quite honestly, when I go into somewhere now, and there's, you know, I was in a cafe in the high street on Friday, and I thought, "nobody's wearing a mask." And it just feels, well, not quite normal, because nothing feels quite normal anymore, but it felt more like normal than it has done, because nobody was wearing a mask.

But once you see a mask, it reminds you all the time doesn't it, of what we're supposed to be remembering to be [afraid of], and actually if there was a real pandemic, governments would be trying to calm us down, not make us frightened.

R: Which I suppose ties in with the sinister overtones this messaging has come with.

A: And I think masks actually, apart from emotionally and mentally damaging to the wearer and the viewer, they're also physically damaging to the wearer.

R: Could you tell me more?

A: Because our bodies aren't meant to be re-inhaling the air, all the germs that we're expelling. It's cutting off, well, natural breathing, there are chemicals in these masks, fibres in the masks, which are

going into our lungs. I've heard and I don't know for certain, that they're bad for the brain, the heart, the lungs. It's not natural for us to wear something over our faces. It's just not. It's not natural. And I particularly hate to see young parents with a baby and they're wearing a mask. And the baby's having to try and look at a face from behind a mask. I just think that's just horrendous to see that.

R: Yeah, okay. And so, you've talked about being propagandised. And, again, masks, messaging, it's all part of this thing. So do you ever remember a certain point? You know, was there a certain tipping point? Because I know you alluded to feeling propagandised and going from a position of initial belief through to scepticism, but I'm kind of keen to hear if there's a sort of precise moment at which that belief in what was going on turned into disbelief. What was the process of conversion?

A: I'm quite a, I'm a creative thinker, but I'm also a very practical person. And I think I've alluded to the fact that I would be prepared to do things if I could see the point of them...but it became more and more pointless to me. I think it was a it was a "drip drip" of nonsense, where I was standing in a queue outside Waitrose six feet away from a friend...we were talking to each other over the six feet.

And then I could see a couple of police officers and security person standing near the entrance all huddled together having a conversation. And as I approached them, I said: "I thought we were all supposed to be staying six feet apart." And they said, "well, we've got some very important things to discuss." And I thought, "well, that's a load of nonsense, really, isn't it?" Because we're either standing six feet apart because there's something dangerous about us being close together, or we're not. So it was it was a drip, drip feeling of nonsense. And again, sort of just seeing the way things were working in public and people's behaviour becoming increasingly abnormal really.

And all this sort of, I think it just sort of it was a gradual thing. But then I started to have conversations and I started to connect with people who ...had the same sort of ideas as me and ideas about freedom and, you know. So I think then I became absolutely clear that I wasn't the only one feeling this way and I started to have these conversations with people. I think it was through those that I realised that I had a point I had, you know, the doubts I'd felt about all of this...I found a voice really. I found others were thinking the same way. So I suppose towards the end, autumn time last year really where it really hit me.

Like I remember having a conversation with, you know, a very good friend at the time who was not on the same side and she said: "Well we won't have another lockdown, people won't go into an--" and I said "they will!" And later on her, you know talking to her about the vaccine and her saying: "Why would governments want to harm us, our government wouldn't want to harm us." And I could see that people couldn't see that there was any possibility that this was wrong and not it wasn't being done for good reasons or reasons of our health, or the health of the nation.

So I think it was, it was a gradual process. And then it was confirmed, really when I started talking to people who felt as I did, and some of those views were more extreme than mine. And we are a broad

church, as I've said before. So yeah, sort of towards I'd say by the autumn of last year, I was fully convinced that I was right and this was all not as it should be.

R: So you talked a little bit about activism? So are you engaged in any?

A: Well, only in as much as I go to the Stand in The Park, which isn't very active, except we discuss things, I'm more part of discussion groups, really. I've done some of these roadside protests with the yellow boards, which I think are pretty effective actually, because you reach people you wouldn't otherwise reach and perhaps makes people think.

I've been on a couple of the protests in London. But other than that, no, nothing. Nothing else.

R: So yeah, this has gone on for quite some time, this situation. And you mentioned depopulation, and you mentioned that you believe that evil walks among us. So what do you believe, is motivating this all? Where's this situation coming from?

A: That's about very difficult one because obviously, I don't know and I've heard all sorts of stuff, shocking things, satanic things, all sorts of stuff, which I have no proof of at all. I have no, no way of knowing how true any of that is. But I think greed and self interest, and a number of people who have far too much money and power, it's very, very understandable that those people just want more and more of what they have. Because it's it's like a bottomless pit, isn't it?

People, the desire for control, wealth. They're like, very spoiled toddlers who just want more and more of the pie, really. They just want more and more of everything, and nothing will satisfy them because they're deeply unhappy and unsatisfiable human beings, if we can call them that. So I think it's people who see themselves at the top of something. I don't see them that way. I see them as the bottom of something. But it's those people who are running this, who want their way in the world in some way.

And they've talked quite openly about depopulation. They've talked quite openly about there being too many people on Earth. And in my view, it's not for them to say, I think there's too many of them. I'd rather they weren't here, but leave the rest of us to get on with our lives.

R: And how do you think this is going to end?

A: On a good day, I think it's all going to come to a head, because I think there are so many people from so many different angles working to expose this. I think they are exposing themselves by the way they're working, that the level of coercion and the behaviour is just beyond ludicrous now, and I think it's it's becoming much more obvious to even people who've gone along with it so far.

I know quite a lot of people and I know quite a lot of people who know a lot of people who have had one or two injections and say: "No more, I'm getting fed up with this. I'm not going along with this anymore." So I think even those people who have gone along with it, and perhaps don't see it the way I do, I think they've had enough and they want their lives back. So I think this is all going to come to a head, and I don't I don't think it's going to take very long.

I know people who are very pessimistic and think that the whole of our future is gone, and that the world is just over and we're all going to be carted off. But I don't personally think it's going to get to that point. I pray it won't. I do think we're going to lose a lot of people, I think they're going to be a lot of lives lost. And I'm doing a lot of praying about that at the moment. But I think it will, it will come to a head and I think it will explode. I think tyrants always fail ultimately, always. And these people will be brought to justice. I look forward to that.

R: Yeah, well it all depends on who's administering the justice, right? let's just hope it's the right people. And so before we move on once again, what would you have done differently as regards this situation? You mentioned the Great Barrington Declaration?

A: I didn't.

R: Yes, you did.

A: Did I? I didn't mention it in so many words, then.

R: Well, you mentioned about shielding the elderly.

A: Yes. So what would I have done differently? Given that, I don't really believe there was anything particularly different, I don't believe we had a pandemic as such, I would have just carried on as normal. However, had somebody suggested there was a bad flu virus or a virus going around, and there is some controversy about whether a virus is passed on that way, or whether viruses are kind of a terrain theory idea where our bodies have a clear out, I don't know for certain because I'm not, you know, I'm not qualified to say.

However, if I was told that there was a virus that was probably quite dangerous for the vulnerable, I would have suggested that those people who felt vulnerable, could stay at home, if that made a difference to them and that we could help them. We could bring food to them, we could support them in whatever way necessary. And then the rest of us could have just carried on, you know, so it's a bit like everything else, I feel even now people if they want to carry on with all these measures, then let them and the rest of us could just carry on with our lives. That would be fine by me.

R: And so also, we've had fragments of how this has affected your relations with others. So I kind of want to bring that together a little bit. So you talked about kind of certain changes: in friends, in family, in colleagues. ...What about just people in general? when you're looking at the kind of public at large, has the way that you've seen them changed?

A: It has actually.

R: OK, tell me more.

A: I think. prior to this I, because I've suffered with anxiety for virtually all my life...I suppose, because things happened in my childhood and then on, but I've managed it and, you know, lived and probably hidden it quite well, mostly.

R: Until you told me, I wouldn't have known.

A: No. There you are. So I'm not an OCD kind of person, though funnily enough, so I'm not somebody that would need to check, I'd lock the door endless times or wash my hands all the time, you know, I didn't need to. So I thought those people were few and far between, the people who are highly anxious and anxious enough to need to avoid germs at all costs, and all of this, I thought they were few. And now I see them as the many.

I see people as much more fragile, and I see that a lot of people really are unable to think for themselves. They have given their power over to government or the state in general, or the people around them...I know that people have worn masks or not said "anything" in quotes, because they don't want to offend others, or they, they don't want their friends to dislike them, or there's so much of that. And I think that culture has been encouraged, the Facebook culture where everybody, people will post a photograph of themselves, and everybody tells them how beautiful they are, when they don't look beautiful at all, you know, I won't do that. I never have done that. If I think somebody looks lovely in a photo, or the dress suits them, or whatever it happens to be, I will say so.

But you could put any photo up and people will just pile in. And it's all the same stuff. And I think that's a sort of a way of thinking that has come about, where people, they want the approval of everybody around them, they don't want to be controversial, they don't want to stand out. I can remember last year sitting in a cafe, a friend had gone to the loo and I was listening to conversations and I thought "virtually everybody is having a conversation that has no surprises in it for me. It's a conversation I've heard over and over."

Any number of people, in any number of places, may be in a very middle class town, but but they're having the conversations that I've heard 100 times before and they agree with each other. One person says something, the other one agrees, there's no sort of, "well, actually, I think differently, or I've had

another thought about that.” There's none of that goes on anymore. And I think that's a big change from maybe years ago, perhaps I'm wrong.

R: How was it before?

A:...I don't think I've in the past, felt that everybody felt they've got to say the same things, or that we've got to be so careful to avoid saying anything controversial or that might offend or you know, you might say the wrong thing, and therefore everybody jumps down your throat. So you have to avoid that at all costs.

But we've become a-- I hate the word “woke” but we've become a very “woke” society where actually the thing it's suggesting [being “woke”] it's doing is the opposite of what it's really doing. Which is it's dividing people. It's not making people less divided. It's actually dividing them more.

R: Yes, it's turned segregation into a virtue. And then what about your relationship with the state? Because you mentioned that you'd be happy enough to follow diktats, should you find them necessary.

A: I'm a law abiding citizen if you like. I generally follow the speed limit, do my job, I'm [an] honest, decent, law abiding citizen. But that's one of the things that's happened to me in this last year or so is that I've been-- to say, “I've been made to feel,” that's that's probably the wrong phrase, But I've felt that people have seen me as somebody anti-establishment, outside the law, unlawful or wrong, or uncaring. I mean, the very opposite of the person I am really.

And a lot of the people I've met are those people too. They're not all people who previously had ever demonstrated, or spoken up about anything, you know, they're, they're a mixture and that's fascinating in itself actually. The wide variety of people who I meet now, who I talk to, who are from all walks of life: religious, not religious, left and right. And I mean, most of us feel politically homeless now, I've heard people say mostly they were Brexiteers or remainers, or mostly, Brexiteers.

R: Mostly Brexiteers, yeah.

A: But that's not always the case either because I was a bit on the fence with it all. Typically, I was not like everybody else on that either. I didn't really have a strong feeling one way or another, I could see advantages and disadvantages. Now I see it as just another way that they began to divide us actually. It was just another way of getting families to argue and people to fall out before, before bringing on the big one, which has caused enormous problems and families, I think.

R: Yes, there have been some parallels and I've heard that arguments over Brexit got very very heated indeed and well, things have been very strange, certainly, here in amongst households,

and whatever else. So would you say there's been a loss of trust [in that state] there...you know, what is government looking like?

A: It's some people, I can see, some people think just they've just been useless. You know, people are saying, you know, not the people I'm talking to mostly now, but I can see people who are on the other side who, who perhaps go along with everything else, they can see that government have, they think they've just made some mistakes, and they've messed things up.

But I don't see it like that...I don't think the government are in charge, I think they are being controlled, I think they are bought and paid for. I wouldn't trust them as far as I could throw them and I'd like to get rid of the lot of them. And like, I sound politically homeless now. I want a big collaboration between between all the freedom parties, so that we get something better.

R: Yeah, the problem is, there's been a big old split of the vote.

A: Yeah.

R: Because there's so many of them, which is not what we want. No, no. And yeah, the last the last question, then last questions. Yeah, much of this is now the march towards a vaccine passport and different countries are further along that plug hole than others. So what is your take on the vaccine passports?

A: I think it's absolutely abhorrent. Coming from a Jewish background, it just brings up those feelings for me of what happened with the Nazis and Jews and of course, they vaccinated, they experimented on the Jews in the concentration camps as well. But vaccine passports, this idea of people being unclean, left out. It just, it's just beyond the pale...this will be a very divisive, because, you know, if you have, if you know, people who you were friends with, you may still be quite friendly with but for example, they can then go out for a meal or to the cinema, and you can't, and they still go. I mean, that's obviously happening now with me through work, you know, work parties where I'm I'm not invited, because I won't take a lateral flow test.

So they're all enjoying that. If I were somebody that would take a lateral flow test, but knew that others couldn't, or wouldn't, and they wouldn't be allowed to go, I would not go. Even if I was somebody who would take it, I would not do that. But I don't know anyone else in that, well, certainly in my work situation, who would have done that.

[R and A exchange ideas on how to demonstrate the absurdity of vaccine passports.] A: "I mean, the craziness, of course of the idea of a vaccine passport is that they're admitting themselves that you're not --however many of these jabs you have, you're still able to pass on this illness and pick it up. So how would a vaccine passport prevent transmission? If everybody in the restaurant has a vaccine

passport, but they can still transmit the virus, what would the vaccine passport do except exclude people who are perfectly well?

R: An optimistic reading of it, and this is the most charitable I can be, is that at the very worst, it would stop anybody who's acquired an infection there, because these things don't stop you from getting it in passing it on, possibly from ending up in a really bad way. But that is as far as I'm willing to go. And that's on a good day. Right?

That's the most generous I can be about it. But it's literally like sort of the equivalent of wearing a crash helmet in here [a house] in case the ceiling falls down.

A: And if you speak to scientists, such as Dr. Yeadon, he would say that in order for you to be infectious, you have to have a lot of symptoms. You know, you have to be presenting with a runny nose, a cough, you have to have symptoms. There are other schools of thought that say that actually because the vaccine, if it does work, it prevents symptoms, you could be infectious without showing anything because you've had the vaccine oddly, rather than because you haven't.

[R talks about a relation who has survived COVID pneumonia, and the conversation turns towards sickness and death, with R's contention being that the current response has been due to a pathological fear of death.]

A: Yeah, I'm interested because what of you say about health and death and illness, and I think you're right about that. Even the fact we talk about people "passing away," or we don't mention that they've died and I do. I make a point of saying "I'm so sorry to hear that your loved one has died," I don't say "passed away," because it all seems too sort of nice and clinical and sort of put into a different sort of box, and I think that's true.

I think we've come so far away from actually, the times when people had, you know, the coffin on the table in the dining room, and people wailed and wept. And you know, I think we've just become so separated from that. And, you know, 100 years ago, people died at all sorts of ages, whereas we don't expect that now, do we? We think people live to be very elderly and they go off into a home, and they die away from everything.

R: Yeah. Well, a lot of what's happened is we've removed ourselves from an actual constant of everyday life. That was actually on the schedule. Now that we're talking about it, I probably will transcribe it, but you know. Yeah. And actually, in the Indian tradition, the attitude towards death is a lot more as you describe it. I don't know how it would be in current days, but all of the funerals I went to for relatives, the coffin is brought into the home. It is kept open. People file past it. And believe it or not, photos are taken. Just as we have photos of our weddings, we also

photograph the last moments of our dead. Okay, they don't make it into the family album but they are still--

A: Recorded.

R: Yes, they are. They're still treated with that same esteem, as worth having a camera in front of. And yeah, everything has been sort of sanitised and so on so forth. I personally use a phrase sometimes that "somebody's gone the way of all flesh." Is it euphemistic? I'm not sure that it is. It is saying that "this thing is inevitable." One has gone the way of all flesh, that is to say to be in nonexistence. So what's your what's your view on the whole sort of being sick and dying thing other than--

A: I think we have to face it, I think I mean, as a child when my grandfathers died, ...I wasn't at the funerals of my grandfathers. I went to my grandmother's funeral. But the first--I was with my mother when she died and I was 22. In fact, I was the only one in the room because my father and my brother couldn't face it, we were at the hospital and my sister wasn't there. And I had to make the decision not to ring, because in those days was not such a thing as a mobile phone.

So it would have meant me ringing her where I knew she was at my house on her own and she would have then had to get a taxi to come to the hospital and she wouldn't have been there in time. So I made the decision not to do that. And I was with my mother when she died, and my brother and my father came in afterwards so I faced it head on.

That that was it for me, then I would be with people when they died I remember being with my grandmother and my father obviously as well. It's not easy, but I think it's better than the alternative which is to just look the other way or not face it. You know I think you have to face these things head on.