

Welcome to another episode of The Restless Policy is Leading with me, Alistair Campbell.

And with me, Rory Stewart.

And me, Gerry Adams.

Well, thank you for introducing yourself. And let me say, Gerry Adams, let's describe Gerry Adams.

I think Gerry Adams to some, a heroic freedom fighter leading his country to unity and peace and prosperity to others, a figure of hate and seen as a man of terror and violence.

To me, the guy that I saw very, very, very often in close proximity, particularly with Tony Blair and Bertie Herney, we've just bumped into an integral part of what became the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement. So something of an enigma.

It was only because we persuaded you and your government to embrace peace.

And when Mr. Blair changed British government policy to actually talking to Sinn Féin, imagine, I just imagine that the British government wouldn't talk to a person who had a man dead as an MP, leading a political party, which had a declared publicized peace objective.

But you'd moved before that, in a sense.

Of course we did, yeah. But you can only move so far and in fairness to you and to Jonathan and particularly to Tony. It was only when you came in with that big majority and the new government

and new kids in the block that you turned things the way they were turned.

So you talked to my predecessor and member of Parliament, Penrith and Board of Willie White Law, I guess, back in the 70s.

That was a long time ago, yeah.

73, 72, 73.

Do you remember him?

I do remember him.

Do you?

I do remember him.

But what was your sense, I mean, when I take you back to your youth, what was your sense those early days, Sunningdale or Willie White Law or all that period?

Just to be clear, in the context, you were part of the delegation that met White Law.

Yeah, I was one of the delegation. Martin McGinnis was, we were the two younger, just by coincidence, the two youngest members of the delegation. I was 23, he was 22.

On reflection, I think, but Willie White Law attempted to do was brave.

You know, this place was up in flames. It wasn't that long after Bloody Sunday, where the British paratroop regiments had shot all those people in Derry.

And the Stormland Parliament was paroked. It was a union-dominated regime.

So in fairness to Willie White Law, what he tried to do was brave.

It didn't last very long. You know, the discussions were far enough.

I had actually been involved. I had been interned without trial.

And I had been released and myself and another Republican called Dahio Connell had negotiated out arrangements whereby those talks would take place.

So there was a wee bit of sensible work being done. But it fell apart in weeks.

Like, I don't even know how long it lasted.

And you ended up back in jail pretty quickly.

Ended up back in Long Beach. Well, a year later.

I mean, we've learned enough of that since. And just interestingly enough,

40 years later, for some reason, we were all in Downing Street and it lasted long.

It was intended. We almost our flights and the government arranged for us to be flown back in a private plane. And there we were. And exactly the same airport. It was a military airport.

That you'd been at 40 years early.

Martin McGinnis and I both twigged at the same time as we were getting off the bus.

He said, we were here. We were here 40 years ago.

It'd be amazing to be there as part of that delegation in your early 20s.

And you've been at it all that time. You've been doing this all this time.

And I'd like to know, we talked about you being in jail and in turn,

how many times have you been in jail? How many times have you been asked

whether you're a member of the IRA? I know the answers that you've given

every time you've been asked that. And where do you feel you are on the overall journey that you've been trying to get your whole life?

Well, there's rarely an interview that I do, particularly with British journalists that I'm not asked was or am I a member of the IRA?

Why don't you just say proudly yes?

Well, because I would be telling lies. And you know, we can't be telling lies about these mothers. Now, what was your question? I've been doing it all this time.

How many times in jail?

Well, I served four and a half years in jail. I was in the prison ship,

Maidstone. We had a prison ship in Belfast, Harvard,

which sat in sewage from the trains. And we were kept below decks. That was in 1972.

I was then shipped up to Longcash, kept out for a while,

released and took part in those talks, put back again, was in Belfast prison at least twice,

was in the eight blocks of Longcash for a very short period and spent most of my time in the

cages of Longcash. Interestingly enough, the Supreme Court in London found that my imprisonment was unlawful just last year, that I was unlawfully detained.

In these descriptions of your time in Longcash elsewhere, one often gets the impression that

these kinds of internment actually built a sense of solidarity between you and other Republicans

that gave you an opportunity to get to know each other better, to do educational programs together.

That actually built more cohesion. Is that right? Is that how it felt that you were

developing deeper bonds through internment? Well, certainly, there was within the prisons,

with women prisoners and armada prison, and within the prison I was in. There was a prison

community, and most famously, that was expressed in the hunger strikes of 1981, where 10 men died

in hunger strike. There were hundreds of men in prison. Their surety was a bond

developed, and most of the reflection back on it, apart from the hunger strikes, will

reflect back on the funny things that happened, and the crack.

On the crack, Jerry, this is an unfair question, but the cliché we have about West Belfast is

very, very outspoken, flamboyant people, and you often have a reputation for being quite

sort of controlled in your language, and quite almost politician-like. Is that right, that compared

to many of your neighbors, you'd be seen as somebody who's more careful with the words?

I'm very dull.

So there wasn't you at all? There wasn't you at all as dull?

Nobody ever goes out with me. I'm no use.

But you're pretty careful with your words?

Well, for what it's worth, you know, and I make as many mistakes as anybody that talks as often as I have to talk. But I try to, you know, you're talking to so many audiences, so here I'm talking to people, I presume, in Britain, so I'm trying to give an outline. But anyway, the point of making is you have to be, and I want to stress, I make as many mistakes as anybody. But what we're trying to do here is unprecedented, right? We have, by dint of the Good Friday Agreement, a peaceful way to end the union with England. So to do that, we have to persuade people who are for the union with England to vote for United Ireland. So we, all the time, have to be trying to make sure that we don't defend them or that we are, what we're saying can be persuasive and that we can convince them. So that's, that's a utterly democratic, peaceful strategy, that approach.

When did the thinking develop? And so you said, you talked about it being Tony Blair, but long before that, you were starting to think about different ways of bringing to this to live.

The first thing that I wrote on this was in 1976 from Lancash. And it was around the time of the peace, people here in Ireland. And the peace people was formed when the British army shot the driver of an IRA getaway car, shot him dead in the car career out of control and plowed into a family who were at walking and children, the Maguire children, were killed through the peace women. And that entire sort of phenomenon arose out of that awful incident. And I then reflected on that in a little pamphlet which I wrote. And it started to probe it, what is peace and how do you get peace and, you know, and so on. So that was 1976. And how important were your discussions

with Father Alex Reed? Well, Father Alex Reed was a redeptorist priest and he and Father Dez Wilson lived in West Belfast. So they knew what was going on in the neighborhoods and they knew all of the aggression. And the whole line from the British and from the Irish governments was, this was criminality, this was gangsterism. We have to smash it, we have to subdue it and, and so on. So he and I were talking. And there was a huge amount of condemnation of the IRA from the Irish government, from the Catholic Church hierarchy and so on. And I said to them, if these folks want the IRA to stop, why don't they come up with an alternative? So he went away and he tried to get an alternative. And in the course of that, he developed some principles which I think are fundamental to any peace process. You got to talk. You got to listen.

Out of that arises all sorts of other little things. You know, you can't decide who you're going to talk to. You know, if you're going to talk to Sinn Féin, you can't decide that Martin McGinnis can't be in the delegation. You know, if you're going to talk to the DUP, you can't decide that the MPs they can't be under. So there's all sorts of little very good bullet points that would enforce or reinforce any negotiating positions. So what was the essence of his position? Treat people with respect, talk to people, find a way forward and look for an alternative. And he was just central to that. And he was also tenacious. And was the alternative he was always looking for a peaceful one? Yes, of course. But you were at the time operating a dual-track strategy? Well, we weren't operating any dual strategy. The fact is there was a war going on and that was being conducted by the different protagonists, the British forces, their surrogates within loyalism and then the Irish republican army. Has something changed in the overall thinking? When I came out of prison,

a group of us started to try and reboot Sinn Féin. Now, Sinn Féin was an honourable organisation and did lots of good work, but it wasn't a political organisation in the sense that we now see it. And it's very hard to organise politically when you're underground. It's very hard when your Sinn Féin was banned at the time. So it's very hard to do the type of open political work that you would be used to, honest. If a meeting like this would be rated, on the old days, we would have all ended up in an on-cash because this would be an illegal assembly. So that was happening. So you had the efforts to try and get a peace process, the efforts to try and build Sinn Féin as a relevant radical political party and the ongoing war.

All right, Jerry, we'll wait. Let's take a quick break.

This is a programme largely about politics and the way that politics works and how you compromise. And I wanted just a second to touch on Terence O'Neill and your experience in the 60s and how he failed. Was there an opportunity there that was lost and how was that lost?

Well, I was only a kid, but I remember meeting with his children in Australia. They moved to Australia. I remember meeting them subsequently. And they said that he was always bitterly disappointed that he hadn't done more. What was your impression of that, though, as a young man growing up in West Belfast? Did you have any sympathy for what he was trying to do or was he seen as the enemy? It's difficult to answer that with the benefit of all the time.

I was involved in housing agitation. And we had formed a housing action group in West Belfast because people were being held and were being housed in dreadful conditions. And there weren't enough and a lot of... So if I'd asked you about him then, the Jerry Adams of 1967-68, and I'd said, what do you think about this guy, Terence O'Neill? What would your answer have been then? That he should have just given on the civil rights demands. They were very moderate.

They were very, very modest people. But can we not see the political problems he faced? I mean, in the end, even the small movements he tried to make brought him down, didn't they? The first time I was arrested was for selling a newspaper. The newspaper was bound and as part of the public defiance of the Special Powers Act, we decided to take an initiative and go out and public and sell the newspaper. The Sinn Féin organization rebranded itself as Republican clubs and held a meeting. And the Republican clubs were banned the next day. So at a human level, I can have some sympathy with Terence O'Neill. But what they were being asked to

do was simple, reasonable and modest. And the government in London was complicit in all of this. You see, I don't think you can understand anything about Irish affairs unless you see it in the context of English involvement in Irish affairs. So this state is a partitioned and those days it was an apartheid state. That has changed as a result of a work of a lot of very, very good people. So Terence O'Neill, of course, he has responsibility and he may have done his best in his own way. But the London Parliament is, by its own claim, the sovereign parliament.

So how could London preside over a situation where a section of people within the British state was being treated on the basis that people were being treated?

So let's talk about a bit London then. Thatcher in a word, Major in a word, Blair in a word.

Thatcher was actually talking to Republicans through a backchannel

when she was making arrogant denunciations and saying she would never talk to Republicans.

That happened during the first hunger strike. It happened during the second hunger strike

and then it happened subsequently. But what did you make of them all? What was your character assessment of those three leaders? Well, let me deal with these. He won't ever use that term first.

Tony Blair made a difference. I would grievously disagree with his adventures in Iraq and other foreign affairs issues. But on this issue, he made a huge difference and Alastair and Jonathan and the team that were in at that time made a difference. So he deserves great credit. John Major was handed a peace process on a plate and didn't accept it. Now, arguably, he was a minority government. He was dependent on union support and so on. But there's this thing, and I hope this doesn't sound racist, this thing which I describe every so often is the English disease, which when it comes to Ireland, these senior people are just totally oblivious of the needs, the rights, the demands, the aspirations of Ireland. You don't think John Major did accept that you had some legitimate claims in the area of equality and human rights? Well, he may have, but what did he do about it? John Hume and I came up with what became known as the Hume Adams

Agreement. And the Taoiseach of the day, the Irish Prime Minister of the day, Albert Reynolds, gave that to John Major. And the Downing Street Declaration arose out of that. But the Downing Street Declaration, and both John and I made this point, it didn't go far enough. It didn't deal with the core, because what we needed was all of these equality guarantees and human rights protections. But we also needed the constitutional issue resolved. Back to this business about an alternative. So now there is an alternative. Now, if the people here want, they can vote to leave. How do you, at a human level, deal with the question of death and victims and meeting families of people who lost loved ones? How have you, over time, sort of how did you think about in the 70s? How do you deal with it now? If a mother stops you in the street and wants to raise the horrors of what her family went through, how do you deal with that as a person?

I have met many, many, many families of victims of the conflict, including victims of the IRA. And not all victims or not all victims' families respond the same way. Some were the very, very best peacemakers, very, very best pioneers for peace. Some are still hurt. Some have been fractured and never recovered. So I try to deal with all of this in a very respectful way. And listen, you got to listen. And I try to do that. Now, I come from a community. I have two family members were killed. I was shot myself. I'm advised that there's a lay death threat against me at this time. My home was bombed twice. So it isn't an academic thing. I know what it's like to attend the funeral or to be at a wake house. So the big thing is that now all of that has ended.

So we can't undo it. And obviously, if people have resentments, that's far enough. That's their right. How do you feel about the legacy bill and what they're trying to do with that?

I think it's shameful. Just quickly explain what the legacy bill is to listeners because not everybody's aware of it. The bill that our government has brought forward to try to deal with some of the outstanding issues of violence at the time. And the idea is to effectively have an amnesty? Well, what they're doing is they're defending their own operatives. I mean, there are two issues to this. First of all, there was an agreement, the Stormont House Agreement. The British government were party to that. They've torn it up. They've brought in this new bill. It's at the best of Northern Ireland veterans. It's at the best of right-wing Tories and others who are from that little Englander mentality. And they have just torn it up because they don't want to see British operative soldiers, police officers going through that process. But every single political party here is against what they're doing.

Does every party are against what they're doing? You know, there are elements of the Tory party who are against what they're doing. It's just terrible stuff. I noticed you didn't actually answer to me about that. You're really a part of that. When the Brian bomb happened,



would you have been happy if the entire cabinet had been wiped out?

Hobbiness is not a term or hobby. It's not a term that I would use. Would you have welcomed their demise?

I don't want to get into that type of, come back to what Rory observed, that type of rhetoric.

The fact is, there was a war. Margaret Thatcher was notorious, not just for harpersetting over the deaths of the hunger strikers, which could have been easily resolved by very simple improvements in the prison regime, but also because she was up front and she was being the iron lady and she was masquerading as somebody who was indomitable and so on and so forth. So there would be very few tears shed for Margaret Thatcher and Republican Ireland or in many villages in Wales or in working class neighbourhoods in Scotland or England itself.

But it's done. It's over. It's gone. All of that's in the past.

You were against the hunger strikes. Yeah, yeah.

And yet they became an incredibly powerful symbol, if you like, of what you were trying to do at that time. Just talk us through your thinking on that. First of all, we were trying to do what I have described earlier, to build a Sinn Féin party and also to try and develop within Republicanism a peace strategy. So we were trying to do that and there's a war going on at the same time. And that was incredibly challenging. So if you like, hand the entire struggle over to prisoners with such high stakes and then particularly when the first hunger strike ended and the first hunger strike ended in some contention where the prisoner in charge was told that there was a deal on its way and he agreed to end the hunger strike. And then that was seen as a sign of weakness by the Thatcher regime and a sign of weakness by elements within the prison system. And despite valiant efforts by Bobby Sands to make that work, it didn't work. So my thinking and the thinking of others was that we couldn't have a repeat of what happened the first time. It was strategic and it was tactically something. And also, these are our friends. I mean, I talked about being in prison. I was in prison for some of these folks. These are our friends. And it ended up, as you know, famously, watershed and Irish political struggle. Jerry, I just come back. I joined the British Army in 1991 and my first barracks, Clive Barracks, had been blown up by the IRA two years early in 1989. So I was living next to a building. Where were you?

In Shropshire, Turnhill, in Shropshire, Clive Barracks, in Shropshire. And I was listening to your answer on the Brighton bombing. And I guess some listeners will feel like me a real disquiet with your answer because they'll feel, you know, amongst those people killed were just wives of Tory MPs going to a Conservative Party conference, going to bed in a Brighton hotel and they get blown up. But it isn't what most people think of as a war. I guess maybe this listeners will feel that these weren't legitimate combatants. Well, maybe I could take that from the families, but I couldn't take it from a former British soldier. People in my house weren't combatants. People in my street weren't combatants. I mean, I feel I was a legitimate combatant. I mean, I wouldn't have taken it to person if you'd had a shot at me. But I never went to war. You came to me, you know, when you came in, in cargo and tax. But in retrospect, you don't feel there was a distinction between kind of wives of MPs going to a conference and somebody like me? I think, including, including, let me say this, the deaths of British soldiers or AUC officers, I think all those deaths are to be regretted. It's a regrettable part of our history and clearly civilians for them to be killed doesn't matter whether it was accident or not. That's even more regrettable. And thankfully, we're now out of, out of all of that. And we need to learn the lessons of it because what's happening in Palestine now? What's happening in the Sudan?

What's happening in Iraq? What's happening in Ukraine? And what happened here? It's not that long. I lived 30 years under military occupation. How long were you in the British army? Very short time. You were very smart. You've had a pretty remarkable political success. Your political strategy has got you to a position where if the institutions were up and running, Sinn Fein would be running the show, First Minister. You've got Mary Lou McDonald on the brink of becoming t-shirt possible. Do you not think there are lessons? You mentioned some of these other struggles going around the world. Do you think there are lessons for other organizations that are involved in sometimes violent struggle from your political strategy? And I wondered if you thought that, what you thought those might be? Well, first of all, we have been successful politically, but we still haven't got army and objective, which is to end the union with England. And obviously that will be assisted if Sinn Fein continues to grow in strength. I think there are lessons not just for other people in struggle, but for other governments. See, it takes two to tango. So it took, as I said before, the leadership of Tony Blair on the one hand, of Birdie Ahern on the other hand, of President Clinton, as well as John Hume and, you know, all the folks involved, as well as those of us who were in Republican leadership. And, you know, Martin McGinnis has gone to many of these conflict zones and talked to people and, you know, we can't preach to them. You know, we're not up to us to dictate what they should do. Jerry, how did Ian Paisley come on side? I'd love to understand the politics of this. It seems to me from a distance that his political interests, his party, he could have had a future in just remaining objuret and refusing to join in, because there would have been many unionists that would have celebrated him. First of all, and I have commanded David Trimble, who was the first minister from the unionist position. But it was up and down with David, and it wasn't tenable, and he couldn't get his own party in order. So we decided that we would try and get Ian Paisley into that position. Now we were in the Northern Assembly with him, so we were across the chamber, and we were moderating our differences in that way. And we advised the two governments. I advised Tony Blair that we were going to try and do something with Ian Paisley. I took away 18 months, close to two years. The matter that we had advised was to remove every obstacle he put up, so that at the end of it, he would have no option but to say to go in or not. And we thought he would decide to go in, because one, he wanted to be in that position of power. And two, we noticed across the chamber that he was listening to some of the things that we were saying, that there was a sort of, I'm not saying there was an accord, but you could get a sense of relationships sort of being developed. And it would take me too long to describe all the prompulations to get all of that in place, but he did famously go in with Martin McGinnis. And it feels like a sort of miracle, presumably something that in the late 60s, early 70s, you would never have been able to imagine. No, but neither would they have been able to imagine a Republican like Martin McGinnis being in the same position. So sometimes people can surprise each other in a good way. And it comes back down to the divisions in Ireland are very artificial, as are most divisions between human beings. And it's a bit of a cliché, but a lot of people have much, much more in common than they may think. So Ian at the ripe old age of whatever age he was, he came in and did a decent job and cheered people up and Martin worked with him. And I think, I mean, Martin made a sterling contribution to the whole struggle and to the whole peace process, but in fairness to Ian Paisley, he did very, very well. And we were talking there understandably about the number of people who have been killed.

There have been half a million people born in this statelet since the Good Friday Agreement. So unless they had personal family connection to conflict, they have no memory. You walk about here, all these young kids, you know, they have no memory of it. They're living in a totally conflict-free zone. So that's the great, you know, if you want an achievement and there's lots of achievements, but that's the big singular achievement that those young people.

And also that there are people now out there who would otherwise be dead if the conflict had continued. You did say not that long ago that the conflict could have gone on forever. And we've had recently the death of so-called state knife infiltrator from the security services. What's your sense of how deeply your organisations were infiltrated by the security services? Well, we always worked on the basis that, you know, the special branch was set up in Britain against the Finians. And one of their tactics was to recruit agents and informers. So you always work on the basis that there are people there who have been tricked, they've been blackmailed, they've been coerced, or they've been paid to work for the British or to work for intelligence services. You work on that. That's the life that you live, you know.

So has anything emerged from that story that shocked, surprised you?

No, none at all. You get to know as you go along, like our car was bugged out. We famously brought a bug back to Leeds Castle to get back to Tony Blair. I remember you found it. I'm sorry to bug you with this. Yeah, we found it in Connolly House. So you work, you just get to the point. Interestingly enough, in Castle buildings in Yuleville, for the Salister, everybody presumed that Castle buildings was bugged. I mean, even Governor Ministers who they wanted to talk to took it on site. So that's just part of where you are, and that's the way it works.

And that's one of the reasons why the British have brought in this shameful bill, because you're still doing the same thing in other parts of the world.

During the final one for me, we go around and around this stuff, but I'm interested in, in the end, why outsiders came in. In many of the conflicts I've seen around the world, people would say that they don't want outsiders getting in. It's an internal issue. They want to resolve it themselves. They're not interested in Finnish Presidents turning up and US Presidents turning up. I think that was one of our big successes. The mantra of the British government was, this is an internal matter for the government of the United Kingdom, piss off. So they told everybody. And President Clinton's intervention then opened up the possibility. And the politics of President Clinton are not that dissimilar from the politics of Tony Blair and so on and so forth. And then that made it easier, because once George Mitchell was put in as a special envoy, then he did another special envoy, and then these other countries, the Nordic countries or Canada, of all peace, nation histories. So I think that was one of our two international issues, and that that's something we worked on to some degree, plagiarizing the African National Congress's campaign against apartheid was to make it an international issue. So I think that was one of the great successes. And incidentally, you can still see that this very day that we're talking, because here we are, the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. And we've had two American

presidents in town. We've had the American Secretary of State in town. And they still retain that very, very active interest. You and I attended a dinner recently at Hillsborough Castle. And I've seen you there many, many times before when the negotiations were going on. But this was quite a kind of grand lavish dinner in the newly refurbished Hillsborough Castle. And there was a new portrait of the new king on the wall. And I was just looking at you during the dinner and



trying to get a sense of how you feel in those kind of moments when you're absolutely at the heart of the British establishment in a way. And although you've made all this political progress, you still haven't, as you say, achieved that objective. So what's your sense of your own relationship now with this place, with the British government, and where you think you are on that road to that final destination you've always wanted? Well, first of all, I spent a huge amount of time in Hillsborough Castle. When Moe Moe was there, I spent nearly every Sunday, and we walked in the grounds. And I did the same with David Trimble. David had most of our private conversations up there. And we went right through to Peter Mandelson. And I forget there were so many secondries to stay there. I can't remember their names. So I became quite familiar with it. And I supported a lot Moe's efforts to make it a public park, which she succeeded in doing. So what's my relationship with it? Right? The first time I went into Dublin Castle, I was shocked as a young West Belfast person to see that the old symbols of the Empire are still in the Great Hall in Dublin Castle. They're still kept there, right? And then when I went into South Africa and into the parliament, this is when Arthur apartheid had been got red off. The Africana symbols were still there. And I remember actually saying to Medeba, what was the story? And he said, we're keeping them. We're certainly going to keep them for a time because we don't want the Africana people to think that we're robbing them of all these symbols. So I can live with that, provided there's some parody. We're in a transition. There is change ongoing. And people particularly who have been here maybe 20 years ago, coming in, will see the changes more readily than those of us who live here. So there's a process of change on their way. I think we're at a phase which needs quiet persuasion, quiet, gentle, proactive listening to invite those people who may be pro-union or who may be a bit delitry about the future to come over to the notion of why can't we govern ourselves? Do you worry that the reason for the blockage in the institutions is as simple as the fact that the DUP find it quite difficult with the fact that Sinn Fein would have the First Minister? I think some do, but I believe Jeffrey when he says it's not a problem for him. I believe him. He said it's not a problem for me, Michelle, being the first minister. So I believe that from him. But it's undoubtedly a problem for some. This state was constructed so that that would never happen. So will there be a United Island in your lifetime? Depends how long I live in or how long I'm stuck in this interview wasting my life.

Jerry Adams, thank you. Thank you.

How did that feel then? Jerry Adams telling you that it was very wise that you didn't stay in the army too long. Did you feel slightly menaced? Well, I felt the thing that troubled me most, of course, wasn't him threatening a British soldier was fine. It's more the fact that even with all this time, he still does not feel that these civilian casualties were unjustified. So in particular, I mean, Brighton bombing, these were people who just simply happened to be married to politicians staying in a conference hotel. And that, I think, has always been very odd. But I think it's always been something at the heart of the problem. I mean, the IRA presented itself as an army, but was totally unapologetic about deliberately targeting civilians. And armies, of course, do kill civilians, but they do not set about deliberately blowing up a hotel full of civilians deliberately, right? I mean, they may do so unintentionally. And I think it's very, very odd that not only did they do that, but that even decades later, they're so completely unapologetic about it. We didn't talk about Mount Batten, which was another very dramatic example of a retired 80 year old admiral with his grandson and his daughter-in-law on the boat, and a young Irishman who just happened to be piloting the boat, all of whom were burnt up and

killed. That, by the way, is a big part of the book I mentioned, *The Killing Thatcher*, is the Mount Batten story. I mean, I think, look, not for me to speak for Jerry Adams, I think what Jerry Adams would say is that Mount Batten was a representative of the British establishment and the British forces that were, he saw as an occupying force. I think- Except he was 80 years old, wasn't he? He was completely, you know, he's an 80 year old retired man with his grandchildren. But they had a lot of focus when they were pursuing that military strategy alongside of the political strategy. They had a lot of focus on what they call spectacular. Brighton Bomb would have been, you know, especially if it had taken out Margaret Thatcher, that would have been the ultimate in terms of the spectacular for them. So they were significant in terms of their overall strategy. And if you think about it, the same day that we were speaking to Jerry Adams, he was in the audience, sitting in the hall, listening to, amongst others, Rishi Sunak, who actually mentioned him in relation to having taken a decision to be part of the peace process, as it were. So if he were at any stage between when he was, back then, as active as he was, to when he dies, if he was at any stage to come out and say, yeah, do you know what, I was an IRA commander, I was on the Army Council, I was doing all this stuff. Then I don't know, I guess he thinks that you've lived with that fiction for so long. And other people have accepted that fiction up to the point of a Tory Prime Minister. It's very odd, isn't it? And there's also his manner. He's this very sort of genial, sort of almost professorial figure. I showed a picture of us with him and somebody said he looked like Father Christmas. And it's that sort of reconciling that with terrorism is tough. But equally, you know, we have to agree with your friend Jonathan Powell, who said to us when we're in Belfast, as he said many times in the past, you only get peace by negotiating with terrorists. And that it was absolutely the right thing to do in the end to negotiate with him and bring him and Martin McGinnis in. I mean, I was also been reading the most extraordinary book on the Protestant experience in Ireland, which again, I'm going to put in the feed. But that was a real reminder about Protestant violence and Ian Paisley's extraordinary evolution, which we touched on a little bit in that. And it is a pity that we're not able to interview Ian Paisley to get some sense of this transformation. Jonathan Powell, your friend says that it was a near death experience in hospital that convinced him that he wanted to suddenly come to peace and that we should never underestimate the individual factors in bringing peace. Essentially, the other people who were in the room with Jerry Adams and Richard McCawley, who's been alongside him for as long as I can remember, was of, as you say, quite hard to reconcile that persona with somebody who's for a lot of people still such a sort of massive hate figure. But I think you do have to recognize that without him and McGinnis, it wouldn't have happened. None of what we were witnessing last week would have happened. Has he changed a lot over the time? Or is that pretty much what you remember when you were first dealing with him 25 years ago? I always found Martin McGinnis very kind of easy to talk to, very more straightforward in a way. I think Jerry Adams has become more reflective. I think he's become warmer in the way that he engages with other people. Yeah, I would say a much more empathetic human being. So even though you are seeing a lack of empathy in his inability to recognize the hurt and the pain caused other than through the context of that we were at war and that you started it as it were, I actually think in more general terms,

he actually has become a much more empathetic human being.

Right. The book that I wanted to recommend is by a journalist called Susan McKay and it's called Northern Protestants and Unsettled People. And it's a series of interviews done. She's herself an Alster Protestant with everybody from people in very tough housing estates who are actually actively involved in the paramilitary violence, right the way through to housewives in wealthy suburbs of Belfast who have nothing to do with the violence at all. It's like V.S.

Naipaul's writing on India. It's extraordinary her ability to bring forward all these different perspectives and somehow layer them over each other, resolve the lurches of defining an incredibly complicated society which has hundreds of thousands of different experiences going on.

I found it so moving. Just another thing to mention, Mary Macalese, former Irish president, an incredible woman, and she did a radio series some years ago called The Protestant Mind. She was raised as a Catholic in a pretty Protestant part of Belfast and she did a very, very interesting radio series. So maybe we should try and dig that out as well and put it in the newsletter.

Very good. Okay. Well, there we are. Yet another prominent historical figure to whom I've introduced

you, Rory. You'll find me some soon to return the compliment I trust. The problem is you know absolutely everybody. So even the people when I'm closer friends to them than you are, you already know them. See you soon. Bye-bye from me.