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# Williams

By Unknown

1

Do you still get  
the same buzz out of it Frank?

Absolutely.

Truth is I love it,  
the Formula 1 stuff, the real stuff,  
the speed they're going  
through the corners,  
it's super men so I really believe  
these guys meta morph  
when they get into the cockpit you know.  
They're immensely quick,  
and the grip round the corners  
is just astonishing.

If you're a pilot flying a jet,  
that's wonderful work isn't it? Why?

Because I'm flying supersonic,  
twice supersonic.

It blows my mind, the speeds  
at which they can control these cars.

What was it, Top Gun,  
what did Mav say to Goose?

He said I feel the need,  
the need for speed",  
I've never forgotten that.

- And you've always had that?

- Sorry?

You've always had that?

Well I've always been  
a little boy for a start,  
always enjoyed speed too.

That's why I finished up in a chair,  
going too fast.

We didn't sit round  
the table as a family  
and discuss it and go  
this is how we're gonna deal with it  
or you know  
mum needs some counselling,  
the kids need counselling,  
dad needs counselling to get through it.

We've never talked about it  
as a family, dad's accident, ever.

If it wasn't for Mum

I personally don't think.  
Williams would necessarily be around.  
I'm a really firm believer in Williams  
is not just always about Dad,  
it's as much about Mum,  
she stood by him through thick and thin,  
I mean she saved his life.  
Williams is unique now  
in that it is  
the last of the old style teams  
where the team owners  
all had their name over the door  
and Williams is the only one left.  
Frank's very rare  
at interviews nowadays  
so he doesn't seem as  
approachable or accessible  
from a, from a fan on the street.  
Whether we see enough  
of him nowadays  
and whether  
that's because of his health...  
We didn't see him this weekend,  
we saw Claire Williams  
knocking about on Friday.  
She's a great face on the TV as well,  
where, you know being interviewed  
and the like,  
it's interesting to have  
a lady as Principal as well.  
I think I may have  
had like the odd grand dream  
but I never thought I would be given  
the keys to the shop ever, ever, ever.  
I think a bit of it's because  
I'm a girl and you know  
I can't possibly understand  
anything about a car  
and you know it's Dad's train set  
and he doesn't wanna  
hand it over to anybody else.  
The Marussia of Will Stevens  
gets out the way of Valtteri Bottas  
and Max Verstappen

but Verstappen's all over  
the back of that Williams.  
What about Williams?  
Where do you reckon  
Williams will place today?  
Uh... might get a point.  
One of the top ten maybe.  
Do you think they're  
contenders anymore?  
No, no.  
Definitely not this year. No chance.  
But Jacques,  
you were the last driver  
to win a World Championship  
for Williams.  
Yeah that's true, that's true.  
- How long ago was that?  
- Uh... '97 so 20 years ago.  
- Yes.  
- Long time.  
Too long really, yeah.  
In comes Bottas,  
goes for another set,  
he's just given up,  
there's nothing they can do really  
and I'm afraid that Williams  
are gonna come away  
from Monaco with nothing.  
It's really frustrating,  
it literally is banging your head against  
a brick wall, what do we have to do?  
You know I have to walk around  
with my head held high  
and I want to be able to do that um  
and I don't feel that I can at the moment.  
Do you think Frank feels it  
as acutely as you do now?  
I'm sure he does,  
he's trusted in me  
and I don't want him to ever doubt  
that trust that he's put in me.  
Do you ever doubt it  
yourself or...  
Um not right now no,

I've got a lot of fight in me left.  
Claire is a tough piece of work,  
whatever she sets out to do  
she always achieves it,  
she's a bit like her mother,  
her mother was like that,  
didn't make a lot of fuss,  
just did things.  
I love this time of the year  
with the Autumn coming.  
These are my mum's blossom trees  
that we planted.  
They look a bit dead now.  
These were the ones that we  
planted on her,  
the anniversary, two year anniversary  
of her passing.  
I wanted something here  
that I could come to and chat to.  
- And do you do that?  
- Yeah I do, a lot.  
I come and ask her why  
we can't fix our um,  
the wheel nuts on our pit stops  
and pray to her that  
she might help the guys in R&D  
that have been working  
so hard on them.  
Right.  
I've got a whole box of  
press clippings in there  
from when I was made  
Deputy Team Principal.  
I thought I would frame them  
and put them up  
and be all proud of myself, but now  
they've just ended up in the shed.  
This is a lovely picture  
from when we won  
the race in Barcelona with Pastor.  
Was this the last time  
you won a race?  
Last time we won a race,  
Barcelona 2012.

So there's another picture of dad,  
someone sent that to me,  
it's amazing, him lifting two wheel nuts,  
how buff was my dad? It's amazing.

It's was phenomenal how fit he  
was before his accident.

Oh this is an awful article that came out  
when mum did an extract from her book.

After the accident,

I think Ginny was

on the edge of a nervous breakdown  
and she found communication,

on an emotional level,

very difficult with Frank,

Frank didn't do emotion

and she perhaps felt that

a book might be one way of

getting the story across to him.

"I'm not usually given

to making New Year's resolutions"

but at the end of 1988 I decided that

I would spend the following year

setting down everything

that has happened to Frank and me

"in the last two decades."

Yes.

These are the little micro tapes that,  
they took about 6 hours of conversation.

That goes in... there.

How long is it

since you listened to these?

Probably not since

I first transcribed them, which, so it is,  
it's 25 years ago and

I mean she sounds so alive today,

25 years later

I can relive that conversation.

I feel very sad that

she's not here anymore.

- Hello Pamela.

- Hello...

- How are you?

- No need to ask who you are.

I feel I should hug you

or kiss you or something.

- Oh!

- I feel I know you so well already.

- Well looking at you...

- I feel I know you so, really yes.

Is it a bit weird.

- It is weird yes.

- Really? Do I look like mum?

You do.

It was so weird

because I didn't,

she obviously didn't tell

anyone in the family,

but there was all this kind

of quite suspicious behaviour going on,

kind of sneaking out or you know

I find the Dictaphone in her glove box.

I was convinced she was having

an affair and confronted her with it

and she still didn't tell me that

that's what she was doing.

She actually met Frank

about three months

before she was due to get married

and that her fianc

introduced her to Frank

and there was an instant sort of

electric connection

between her and Frank,

she was only, I think 20,

she was very young

and she thought, What can I do?

"The flowers are ordered,

the wedding oh..."

Well she was blonde, blue eyes,

beautiful thick head of hair,

beautiful manners, beautiful clothes,

came from quite a wealthy background.

She had

this lovely way of speaking.

Great sense of humour.

And she loved motor racing,

she understood motor racing.

She had a very good feel

for racing drivers.  
Frank probably thought  
you're not gonna believe it,  
she went to a finishing  
school in Switzerland,  
they've got Labradors  
in the garden, I've cracked it.  
I suspect that's what he told his mates.  
I mean she was just  
a fantastic girl to talk to,  
it was like talking to a fella,  
but you know with, wearing Chanel No. 5  
it was just brilliant.  
But in those days,  
to back out of a marriage  
or a looming wedding was  
almost impossible to do,  
you know invitations had  
gone out and stuff like that  
and it would've been very tough  
for her to, to pull the plug on it.  
Anyway she went through with  
the wedding  
but this attraction didn't go away.  
It was the charm,  
it was the Frank William's charm I think,  
that smile and the big green eyes  
and mum just went loony.  
You know,  
I remember going to cross a road  
and she's sitting in a Mini car,  
I said, What you doing here?  
"She said  
Brode, don't say anything to anybody"  
and she had a flask and sandwiches and  
she'd been sitting there from nine o'clock  
hoping Frank would go across the road  
and buy a paper at the newsagents  
and she could get out and say.  
"Oh Frank,  
fancy bumping into you here"  
and she didn't do it once,  
she did it all week.  
It was a real magical



world, the world Frank started racing,  
it was this, you know, boys club  
and I think Frank,  
he loved being a part of it,  
and maybe because  
he hadn't been a part of a,  
a gang, a group  
when he was you know in his childhood.  
My father left, he was  
a bomber pilot, left my mother.  
My mother brought me up.  
She did bring me up  
pretty much single-handedly.  
They lived in  
Jarrow in South Shields,  
that was a difficult environment,  
difficult to make your way out of  
and my grandma made the choice,  
she would sacrifice  
the normal home environment  
in order to try and give dad  
a better chance in life  
by giving him this education.  
My first memories  
were being sent to  
a Roman Catholic convent,  
I was about, just coming up for five  
and I used to run away at  
the railway station  
and they used to ring up  
and say he's here again,  
please stop this happening again,  
whenever I got back, the school  
they took my little trousers down  
and hit me with a, a coat hanger.  
I didn't mind,  
I was quite happy at the school.  
- You were happy at school?  
- I was happy at the school, yes.  
So, and why did  
you run away then?  
Uh... because  
I wasn't that happy.  
No, but it was, I also loved trains,

I love trains and movement,  
I was always trying  
to get a ride in a car,  
you know when someone's dad  
turned up with a car,  
I was all over the car  
and sometimes they gave me  
a ride up and down the road in it.  
I was, I was nuts about cars by then.  
I did qualify for uni  
but I had no interest,  
because I was uh... in a convent for  
three years, one year at a day school,  
then another nine years  
locked up as well,  
I was kind of keen on freedom.  
I'd bought for 80 a racing A35,  
it was a hot little ship I can tell you,  
very quick car  
and that's how I got into  
motor racing proper.  
He was totally  
obsessed by motor racing.  
I mean, to a degree  
that was ridiculous. Ridiculous.  
Nothing else mattered.  
I don't think he's ever been  
in a supermarket in his life.  
Frank, when he first went there,  
there wasn't any room for him  
so he slept in the lock ups  
down the side there in a sleeping bag.  
Everybody had a nickname.  
Roger Bunting was Bunt,  
Charles Lucas was Charlie Luke,  
Piers Courage was called Porridge,  
and Franks was called Wanks.  
Ah is Wanks around?  
No he'll be in later.  
Oh okay.  
They were all  
aristocratic, wealthy guys  
who wanted to go motor racing  
and Frank was mixing with them.

And he wasn't either  
aristocratic or wealthy.  
Well, all the other guys  
that live in that flat  
had hereditary incomes.  
Frank didn't, nor did I,  
so Frank had to earn some money.  
So the way he earned money  
was to buy and sell parts.  
And every waking moment  
he was chasing around the country  
buying stuff for a pound  
and selling it for 2 pound.  
He called himself Frank Williams  
Racing Cars in the end.  
The motivation behind the organisers  
wanting certain drivers was  
that in France they had to have Matre,  
they had to have Beltoise  
and Servoz-Gavin starting.  
Italy had to have a Ferrari on the grid.  
And I guess England  
particularly wanted to be RM.  
He seemed to me to be  
the ultimate wheeler dealer.  
And then he expanded  
and expanded and pretty soon  
he was selling a lot of cars  
to European drivers particularly in Italy.  
So Frank would get  
a phone call from an Italian customer.  
Hey Franks,  
what are you gonna give me  
"for my car I need a new Brabham?"  
I'll give you X for it."  
Okay, I'll come and get it."  
He's got an order  
from the same customer  
for a brand new car.  
He'd then take that car apart,  
repaint it,  
re-electroplate it, re-polish it  
and it would be, 3 months later, a totally  
immaculate brand new looking car

with a brand new chassis number  
that he got out the back door at Brabham.  
The guy would then get the car back  
and what he actually got back  
was the original car.  
I know one guy had the same car  
for at least 3 years  
but he thought  
he got a new car every year.  
Ginny had grown up  
in a very sheltered environment  
and suddenly there was this man  
who didn't go by the rules  
and he was very exciting.  
We'd go to parties on a Saturday night  
and Frank's dancing with Ginny  
and it's getting obscene  
and her husband has got  
daggers coming out of his eyes  
"and I walked up to Frank and I said  
Frank, what the fuck are you doing?"  
I said you can't be doing this,  
have a normal dance,  
I mean you know the only thing  
he wasn't doing was having sex,  
and Frank said, Oh I hadn't noticed"  
and Ginny said, Well I certainly hadn't"  
but everybody else had.  
And then of course the show  
was on the road then with them two.  
And she moved into a flat  
and then she thought,  
How do I let Frank know that I'm here?  
Because I mustn't let him know that I,  
left my first husband because of him,  
"that would scare him off."  
So he didn't drink but  
what he loved was fresh orange juice,  
so she wrote a letter,  
'if you fancy some fresh orange  
juice, it's now being served at... ',  
and she put her new address  
and a day or two later  
the doorbell rang

and he turned up at the door.  
Looking for  
some orange juice?  
Looking for some orange juice,  
obviously.  
And they're away...  
I saw Frank Williams  
make a very good start from the back,  
he's now in third place  
from about the third row of the grid,  
that's very good indeed.  
Back then his whole thing  
was to be  
the greatest racing driver in the world.  
..who's the yellow car  
sneaking through there?  
Frank Williams.  
It's Frank, look at him sneaking,  
what a battle with these two saloons.  
My word...  
He was racing saloon cars,  
but for some reason,  
he never had an in built limit,  
he would just go faster  
and faster and faster  
and fly off the circuit.  
- And who's off there?  
- Frank Williams.  
Frank Williams trying too hard,  
Frank always very fast  
but very hairy and he's living up to it.  
When I started doing  
uh... Formula 3  
sometimes I would encounter people  
who would say to me  
do you know that chap Frank Williams?  
Yeah, I know Frank Williams,  
oh, he's so fast and he,  
and he crashed here  
and he overtook here  
and he did all kinds of things.  
So Frank had this amazing reputation  
as someone who was lightning fast,  
not always staying on the road.

There were a lot of races, he would've won, but he ended up spinning the car and having accidents, he just didn't have a limit and that extended to his road driving as well.

- Well what was that like?

- Diabolical.

Where did you learn to drive?

In my mother's Morris 1000, she was very reluctant to lend it to me, and she was right because in the end I did roll it on its roof.

But you rolled a few cars in your time.

Not that many, no.

Well it's just that every time we talk about a car it seems to be one that you've rolled.

Well I haven't talked about that many cars though have I?

But didn't you, what was your first racing car'?

- A35.

- What happened to that?

That got rolled.

He was nothing but competitive, against himself in a road car, it was almost at the point, where he would start a stopwatch to see if he could beat

his previous time from A to B.

And I think it dawned on him that pretty soon he was gonna hurt himself, you can't have that many accidents on the road and in the, on race tracks, you know you end up hurting yourself, especially back then when the cars were lethal.

What got me into Formula 1

was only the fact

that after two or three years of racing rather dangerously around the continent it became apparent

that I might have lots of uh... courage  
but nothing like enough skill  
to go with it.  
At the same time I became very friendly  
with a young man called Piers Courage  
who was a brilliant driver.  
And the opportunity came for Frank  
to build a Formula 1 car  
and Piers agreed to drive it.  
And then Piers and I set off in 1969.  
Piers Courage  
was an ebullient,  
fashionable Formula 1 driver  
that captured the imagination  
of everybody who loved Formula 1  
and Piers was just, Frank's idea of  
what a Grand Prix driver should be like.  
He was just bouncy,  
easily charming,  
had a beautiful wife  
whom half of London was chasing.  
Apart from being a great looking fella,  
never had a hair or  
a piece of clothes out of place,  
he was always the smartest guy,  
buttoned down blazer, grey flannels,  
Gucci shoes, he looked almost holy.  
And I remember him  
making a speech,  
he had a slight sort of  
English public school stammer  
and I remember the interviewer  
saying So Piers,  
"how's your car gonna go  
this weekend?"  
"And he said, Well I think it'll go  
like an absolute b-b-b bomb actually."  
Hoping to go one better  
than his second placing last year  
was Piers Courage  
in the very promising.  
Frank Williams backed De Tomaso.  
I remember last year, my right foot  
terrific cramp in, cramp in it

and also the great blisters  
on my hands from the gear changing.  
Well I kind of adored Piers  
in many ways but in those days...  
it was "Piers is wonderful,  
this is my mate."  
I thought the world of him.  
Piers and Frank were great together,  
they were almost made  
for each other I think,  
you had Piers who was  
really developing as a driver  
and Frank was really developing  
as a team owner, constructor.  
Second place at Monte Carlo,  
can you believe that?  
Second place the US Grand Prix,  
can you believe that?  
5th at Silverstone, a great run.  
Everybody wanted to be a  
racing driver and Piers was on his way,  
he'd beaten  
Jackie Stewart and Jim Clark  
and he was a really, really good driver.  
Lark Ascending J'  
Vaughan Williams  
And suddenly he dies in this horrendous  
accident in Frank's car.  
I was in the race  
and it was a terrible accident  
involving us knowing that it was Piers  
that had the accident  
because his helmet came off.  
And when you heard the news,  
how did you hear the news?  
Well it was, all I will say is that it was  
a major shock,  
I was very young, you don't  
expect a shock like that  
and I remembered,  
I went to the race organiser,  
a man called John Corschmidt  
and I said,  
John, just tell me is Piers dead?



"Are you sure he's dead?"  
And he said I'm sure  
and I said tell me that again,  
he told me, He is dead Frank",  
three times, I said "OK"  
and I got up and I had the job of telling  
his wife, Piers' wife,  
and I'd rather not talk about that.  
His wife, Sally,  
was in a terrible state.  
Wives in motor racing I think have had a  
much tougher life than any driver has.  
And I remember going  
to the funeral and Frank was fantastic,  
he stood at the entrance of the church  
and welcomed everybody in,  
and there were a lot of people,  
shook hands with everybody,  
thanked them for coming.  
And then after the ceremony  
we couldn't find him  
and I walked back into the church, it was  
deserted  
and Frank was standing behind a big  
stone pillar, absolutely destroyed,  
standing  
there weeping his heart out  
"and I said Come  
on love, let's go home."  
And it was like  
that happy-go-lucky scene we had,  
just dissolved like that.  
But I know that, you know,  
it wasn't really mentioned in,  
Piers wasn't mentioned  
terribly much at home,  
I'm not sure dad ever,  
I'm not sure how you would get over  
a driver dying in your car.  
This ability of Frank to carry on,  
for me it's fairly standard  
in motor racing, knowing racing people,  
most of them only think of tomorrow,  
very rarely do they look back

and very rarely do they allow  
emotion to come into their motivation.  
There was  
a very high mortality rate,  
stupidly high  
and it was just accepted that  
you probably weren't gonna survive,  
I personally did not think I would  
survive my Formula 1 career  
and the odds weren't very good.  
On the second lap, disaster strikes,  
Von Trips loses control  
but the race goes on.  
Those cars were effectively death traps,  
if you had a head-on in one of those  
they folded up  
round you like an envelope,  
You didn't get out of them.  
The cars so readily caught fire,  
the fuel systems in a minor impact  
nearly always sprung a leak  
and the fires were the thing.  
We had a series of deaths,  
one each weekend for four consecutive  
weekends, four of our friends died.  
The ethos of Formula 1  
was back then, this happens,  
ifs appalling but we, you know,  
we're going to the next race,  
like falling off a horse,  
you climb back on again.  
So this is an article, gosh,  
dad did an interview with  
The Times after Ayrton died.  
'Formula 1,  
one of the most powerful figures  
in Formula 1 bares his soul  
on his star driver's death  
and the revival of his team.'  
Dad says, It hasn't all sunk in yet,  
you see, the fact of Ayrton's death,  
the same slowness of thought  
helped me get over my own accident,  
"I suppose that is why I'm so calm

about expressing the fact that he's dead."

The former

world motor racing champion,

Ayrton Senna,

has been pronounced clinically dead.

Senna suffered serious head injuries

when his car left the track

and crashed into a concrete

wall.

I remember at Ayrton's memorial service.

Mum said don't you dare cry,

she said this is not your time to be sad,

she said this is not your loss.

Mum was a very loving lady

but she was very much of that mentality,

stiff upper lip, exactly like dad.

I think they both probably

thought that emotion was weak.

Well I mean it's not common

for men to show emotion,

serious emotion,

maybe anger but that's about all,

I mean you should never start crying

or any of that stuff.

Never,

you should never start crying or...?

We, I was, I was,

I shed a few tears

when Piers was killed definitely.

Mm... And when Ayrton,

when Ayrton died,

I mean they're my responsibility.

- When Ayrton died?

- Yeah sure.

But, er, it was out responsibility,

he was in a racing car

operated by us, as was Piers.

Yeah it was a Williams operated car.

And so how did you feel

on that day?

Far from well.

Here he comes down the outside,

that's a brave place to try and overtake.

Oh mama mia, mama mia,

oh they're gonna touch.  
Bottas has a line!  
They hit! They hit!  
- And Raikkonen's off this time.  
- Good, fuck off.  
We are operating on a budget of  
approximately 110 million Sterling a year.  
And the likes of Red Bull  
and Ferrari and Mercedes  
are operating on two  
if not three times that budget.  
So from a financial perspective  
you could call us an underdog,  
I think that's the,  
the negative connotation for me  
is it gives this sense that Williams  
are weaker than anyone else,  
but we're not, we've been through  
a lot more than a lot of teams on the grid  
and we've always come out fighting.  
And it's Bottas  
who finishes in third place,  
superb podium for him after  
the incident with Raikkonen earlier...  
Finally,  
a podium for Williams.  
So happy, my heart hasn't stopped  
going yet, that was quite intense...  
Third place from Finland, Valtteri Bottas.  
And did  
your mum get to see you in this role?  
No she didn't, um which...  
you know for me is really sad,  
it's kind of heart breaking really.  
I'm sad about that but Pm more sad that  
she hasn't seen the team turn around,  
because that was  
what she desperately wanted to see  
that broke her heart really at the end.  
I began to realise that  
if I do want a wife  
that she was the best  
I was ever likely to find.  
Well it wasn't, it wasn't a posh wedding,

you know with white stuff everywhere,  
it was a, what do you call that thing,  
a reg, a reg, registry whatever.

- A registry office.

- Thank you very much.

I think dad had said that  
he would son' the registry office out  
and never did and would get the rings  
but he didn't have any money  
so Mum had to borrow money from  
um Dave Brodie

I think it was that bought the ring.

So that's it, I went there  
quarter of an hour early,  
gave them 8.00, never got that back,  
didn't expect it back.

It was all over in 15 minutes.

Her parents certainly weren't there,  
I'm not sure they approved  
uh... of the match.

Out we went

and I said, "Oh this a great day",  
let's have a celebration, I'm  
gonna buy you all a spectacular lunch."

Frank said,

Not me you're not, I'm working  
and he fucked off, that was it..

I don't know what man  
in his right mind  
would think that that was OK

but you know Dad did,  
and Dad went back to work  
and Mum went to lunch  
and probably really  
didn't think very much of it,  
because she was used to it by then.  
Dad is a completely different beast  
to most normal men.

Frank from when

I first met him was,  
always seemed very fit and athletic  
and he was forever running, every  
night was a long run.

He ran every circuit that

we were at the race track,  
he used to run round it  
and he felt bad if he didn't,  
you know it was like a drug for him.  
Frank is very,  
what would be called focused,  
some people could say narrow,  
I mean, some people  
find Frank a bit unusual now  
and think it's because of the accident,  
well it isn't, he was always very unusual.  
In Frank  
there 's a huge amount of repression,  
there's a huge amount of determination.  
There's an extraordinary retentive  
obsessiveness.  
I suppose,  
motor racing people in general  
are the most intensely competitive people,  
I've ever known.  
They're not  
very mature intellectually or culturally  
because they neither read nor think  
uh... very much except about  
what they actually do to which  
they think in an extraordinary degree.  
I've never been close to Frank socially.  
I mean, we've never...  
I don't, I don't think  
we've ever been out for dinner together.  
He felt that anything  
that involved socialising  
and having a drink or relaxing  
was actually a waste of time.  
I am addicted to motor racing",  
Frank Williams  
declared uncompromisingly,  
motor racing is what matters  
most in my life and then he goes,  
Well I have a family which  
I love very much,  
but they tend  
to take second place to the business,  
"there's no question about that".

But did you used to do  
the family holiday type thing?

Never done that, never.

Oh it's too late now anyway,  
never interested in that.

Oh my god,

well this is embarrassing,

Mum wanted a hotel

to take the three kids to

and family tradition was

to have a picture of all of us

on the balcony with Mum,

so that's me and Mum there,

so would've been when I was

16, look at me, horrendous.

So in total we went to Marbella

with mum 32 times, 32 years.

How many times did your dad come?

Never, not once.

- And that didn't bother you?

- No.

Mum always used to tell us,

there's no point having your father here

because he would drive us all mad,

so we just used to go down there

and we had a lovely time.

Can you get that wheel,

fast as you can, the bottom one.

Joe have we got

another wheel mounted?

Frank endured

a lot of piss taking for his efforts

and you know

he was the poor northerner

that didn't have a pot to piss in

and his cars were rubbish and, you know,

he didn't have half the parts for them.

Frank couldn't afford new tyres

and was racing

with second hand Firestone tyres I think.

I wish they'd ban

tyres, there's just too many.

If Ginny hadn't been there,

Williams wouldn't have made it,

cause a lot of the money  
that kept it going was hers.  
I remember Ginny gave him 8.00 once  
to go out and buy some fish and chips,  
I think it was  
and he went out and bought  
eight Champion sparking plugs  
and never came back for three days.  
No I don't think my parents were  
happy when they learnt  
that she'd sold her flat to help Frank  
and to give him a bit of the money.  
If there was  
a common denominator through  
the first decade of his relationship  
with Virginia, would be penury.  
Frank Williams' team  
is at its lowest ebb  
the cars are well down the grid  
in seventh and ninth places.  
Frank came round to see me  
"and said Brode I can't carry on"  
and he had a bit of paper  
with debts on it and they were huge,  
and then overnight uh... this guy  
who had been creeping around with Frank  
and giving him  
little bits of money, Walter Wolf,  
did something that happens  
in business all the time.  
Walter bought out Frank's debt  
and took control  
of the Williams Formula 1 team.  
Walter was clearly  
a pretty clever business man  
he'd made a fortune many, many  
tens of millions by himself.  
I thought let's give this a crack.  
But by half way through 1976,  
it was very plain to Walter  
that the race team wasn't running well,  
and that Frank didn't have  
the capability to turn it around.  
And then Frank went to the factory,



put his key in the front door,  
it wouldn't work. Then,  
the side window opened and a guy said,  
Frank that's your things there, you can't  
come into the factory,  
you're banned from the factory now.  
He couldn't believe it, he'd been  
locked out of his own factory,  
it was his life, his life was in that box  
and inside that factory.

And then six weeks later, Frank's car,  
which was renamed 'The Wolf',  
went down to South America  
won its first race.

The thing that Frank had been living for,  
for all those years.

One day,

Ginny phoned me up and she said,  
Brode I've got a lot of problems  
with Frank, he's in a fit of depression,  
"he hasn't got out of  
his pyjamas for six weeks."

Sol turned up 11 o'clock  
and I looked at him and I said,  
What the fuck's going on here Frank?

"You've got your pyjamas on."

"And he said Brode, I can't quite  
get my mind together about things"  
and I knew what was killing him.

I said to Frank,

"Look there must be some way  
you can get into Formula 1 again."

"And he said Well I don't know,  
I don't know" he said,  
but I've been thinking about it  
and I might be able to get 185,000  
out of a Belgian beer company  
called Belle-Vue

but we'd have to have a Belgian guy  
called Patrick Nve as driver.

"I said So what?

That's the start of a new Formula 1 team."

Do you think so?

I said, Yeah Frank,

"I said get out of them poxy pyjamas  
and go to work, do what you're best at."

We sat

at my kitchen table and I said right,

"You do a list of Formula 1 team  
names and I'll do a list."

And what was the name  
that you came up with?

Oh it was really tough,  
very testing, very brain stretching  
but we kept it

Williams Grand Prix Operating Limited.

I said

Right I'm taking 2 days off.

We're gonna go find a factory."

"Yeah!" he went.

It was very much  
hand to mouth but uh...

I loved what I was doing

I'm very optimistic

and I felt it would all come right.

At the end of the day,

when you're a racer, you're a racer,  
- it's a bit of a bug.

- A bug?

It gets you.

140,000 fans packed into Silverstone,  
so Hamilton's on the right as we  
look at it, Nico Rosburg on the left,  
the British Grand Prix  
about to get under way,  
lights out, away we go  
and who's it gonna be,  
it's a good start from the second row,  
the Williams and Massa,  
Williams out getting  
both cars past both Mercedes.

Massa leads,

Bottas trying to get  
second from Hamilton,

Hamilton in a bit

of trouble but he's fighting back

but we have a race on our hands,

what a start from the Williams guys.

- I think Valtteri is quicker.  
- He is quicker, he should pass them.  
He should pass them.  
Be careful, be careful! And he's off!  
Hamilton goes off in his attempts  
to try and rest the lead  
and that might give an  
opportunity here for Valtteri Bottas.  
Bottas goes into second place.  
And up front it's Williams  
one and two at the moment.  
Bottas comes in from the race lead  
as Lewis Hamilton  
continues around the track,  
let's see how the stop goes  
for Valtteri Bottas, it's pretty good,  
Hamilton's already along the start  
finish straight, he's alongside,  
Hamilton retakes the lead  
and where does Bottas come back out?  
He comes back out behind  
his team mate, Felipe Massa.  
Oh, Hamilton is pulling away in front.  
Lewis Hamilton  
wins the British Grand Prix,  
he had to fight for it,  
ultimately Williams have  
to settle for fourth and fifth  
but you have to feel for Williams.  
Patrick Head is  
the technical genius inside Williams,  
the engineer swot who  
bestows power  
on the charismatic leader.  
When I met Patrick,  
which is the best thing,  
apart from marrying the wife I married,  
was the best day  
to ever happen to me in my life.  
He was a gifted engineer.  
Patrick is a person who,  
he doesn't suffer fools gladly...  
Oh he's a bully, if he wanted it  
and it wasn't coming

he'd bully his way through.  
A lot of people are frightened of him,  
you know he's a broad guy  
and he can be quite aggressive looking  
but his character is not one that  
junior employees found comfortable,  
you know what I mean, they knew when  
they had made a mistake.

I think most of  
my father's forbears were military,  
one of them General Michael Head  
had been a soldier under Wellington,  
I think not wanting to fail was a very  
strong motivation.

This car's half a second slower  
on the stop watch than the other car.  
Yeah.

The thing that was unique,  
that Patrick brought to the show,  
he was responsible  
for making Formula 1 reliable.

So Frank's cars  
almost instantly finish races,  
which they hadn't been doing before  
and that's  
where life changed for Williams.

The British teams have  
kept ahead with innovative designs,  
the most recent  
being the aerodynamic skirt,  
a rigid panel that scrapes  
along the ground  
between the front and rear wheels,  
creating a phenomenon  
called ground effect.

For Frank Dernie a simple graph  
shows the rise in suction  
under the Williams wood skirts.  
If you remove the skirt you actually  
get so little flow in this area...

The thing  
that really made a big difference  
was a fairing  
along the side of the engine

which allowed  
the flow to remain attached  
all the way to the back and I tested  
that in a wind tunnel test  
just before Silverstone in 1979  
and it was the biggest gain  
of performance I've ever seen on a car  
so I rushed back from the wind tunnel  
and drew the parts  
and we got them made so we  
could use them at Silverstone.  
I remember going out there  
and hopping in it for the first time  
and thinking bloody hell.  
What was  
the difference with the car'?'  
It was better  
it was just better.  
Don't start getting me,  
trying to be technical  
because I'll look like a complete goose.  
We went to the test  
and in the morning,  
everybody had been running and I think  
the best lap time would of been uh...,  
I dunno 12.9 or something  
by somebody and Alan went out,  
I remember the time absolutely,  
he did a one minute 11.88 just like that,  
bang, and the rest of the pit lane  
were doing mid 13s  
and it was most peculiar because  
you were standing there with your thing  
and everybody went...  
and looked down at us,  
they couldn't,  
they just could not believe it.  
In practice,  
Alan Jones in the Saudia Williams  
has slashed an incredible  
seven seconds off the record,  
and that's a lot these days.  
Alan was a man's man,  
he was an Aussie,

it's all you expect from an Aussie,  
maybe you know big character,  
strong personality,  
took no nonsense from anybody.  
He liked his fun, he liked to drink,  
though I think he always had a bit of  
a struggle keeping his weight down.  
After a race  
you'd nearly always see him  
pouring a beer down  
his throat or two or three.  
In motor sport there's two good  
reasons to have a bit of a drink,  
one is to commiserate  
and one is to celebrate,  
so you're pretty safe either way  
you're gonna have a beer.  
Two Williams in the first two rows,  
the incredible veteran,  
the Swiss driver, Clay Regazzoni.  
Well Clay's  
not as quick as he used to be  
he's now very much  
a number 2 driver  
he's number 2 to Alan Jones  
in the Williams team.  
We all sort of expected Regazzoni  
to be quicker than Jones  
but he never was.  
Jones turned out  
to be much, much better  
than any of us had realised I think.  
Now all ready  
for the 68 lap British Grand Prix.  
And punching through,  
it's the two Saudia Williams cars,  
first into Copse Corner and  
they're coming through, that's Jabouifle.  
Jean-Pierre Jabouille  
is going to go through,  
he's got tremendous speed  
and power here.  
510 horsepower and it is still,  
Alan Jones leads now.

When Alan took the lead  
quite quickly and just disappeared,  
Patrick and I were just counting the laps,  
praying for the laps to keep reducing  
because it, there was a new car,  
it wasn't necessarily reliable,  
and witnessed what was about  
to be a major event for the team.  
This became a reality.  
And Alan Jones pulling away now.  
Well I was leading very  
comfortably but then all of a sudden,  
in the rear view mirrors  
I saw a hell of a lot of smoke  
coming out of the back of the car  
and I thought there was  
something wrong for sure.  
And that is trouble for Alan Jones  
and he, the way he's coasting,  
it looks as though he's burst his engine.  
I mean I should've  
hung around for the end of the race  
but I was that pissed off  
I just jumped in my car  
and went back to London  
at about 300 mile an hour.  
So Clay Regazzoni  
is the new leader  
of the 33rd British Grand Prix.  
Clay Regazzoni almost home  
to win the first race ever  
for the Williams team and Frank Williams  
will be beside himself with joy.  
And Clay Regazzoni  
goes across the line  
and he has won the British Grand Prix.  
We were so much quicker  
than anyone else,  
even though Clay  
was nowhere near as fast as Alan  
and of course  
when Alan broke down he won.  
We won a British Grand Prix,  
I mean you couldn't put it in a book,

it was incredible.

Clay, what is

so good about this Williams car?

Everything, everything

laughsL.

It was the first win

for Frank Williams in Formula 1

since he started

over a decade previously.

Frank Williams,

this must be the happiest day

of your motor racing life.

No doubt about that,

you're right yes.

Frank, what were your feelings

during those last few laps?

Well sheer terror

that the car wouldn't finish,

we'd lost Alan and I was terrified of

losing Clay but the car was very sweet.

Frank we've watched you struggling,

if I may say so,

in motor racing since 1969.

Frank Williams,

a man who's kept trying for Britain,

many congratulations Frank,

thank you very much.

I think my parents just,

after everyone had gone,

just sat there,

just on the sofa

of the caravan arm in arm

and just didn't want the day to end,

it was, it was surreal.

So what did that feel like?

Well relief I suppose, a relief,

because a lot of people would think,

oh Frank, bloody Frank hasn't got a clue

what he was doing but I pressed on.

For me personally I felt,

about bloody time.

From that moment on in the season

I think we were totally dominant,

we were a second or two a lap quicker



than anybody else everywhere.

I went on and won

the next three Grand Prix's,

I won the Dutch Grand Prix,

the Austrian Grand Prix

and the German Grand Prix.

And Jones has done it,

and he is the world champion.

He's the world champion of 1982,

Keke Rosberg.

Well he has an eye for the ladies,

Frank, he's always liked a pretty girl.

I, like Frank, had women

literally throwing themselves at me

and you can't help every now

and again pick one up can you?

I used to get notes put on

my windscreen wiper of my car,

there were groupies

going around the circuit

and they were parading

up and down the pits,

unreal, we called

them screwdrivers, and they did.

With any sport you get

a following of glamorous women

who are just there for the action

and they will appear

at the parties in the evening,

sometimes in the hospitality areas

and a lot of the sponsors

employ promotions girls,

all tall and long legs

and very glamorous.

Formula 1 is

a heady cocktail

of strutting temperamental egos

and a deep undercurrent

of male sexual domination.

When I started

there were very

few women working in Formula 1,

some of the teams had a female caterer,

maybe a husband and wife team,

there were press officers  
who were women,  
women were considered  
to be irrelevant, they made the tea,  
booked the flights or provided  
glamorous accompaniment  
to drivers and team owners.  
Although she was a perfectionist,  
she knew that life  
is always full of compromises  
and that was probably one of  
them and she'd fallen for Frank  
but she'd fallen  
for Frank as a complete package.  
And because she was completely  
besotted and head over heels  
that was it and she dealt with it.  
Um I wouldn't.  
Could you imagine at that time,  
a woman being  
Deputy Team Principal or-  
No, absolutely no way,  
women, men in motor racing are sexist,  
they're possibly  
the most sexist people in any sport.  
Women are always going  
to come under more scrutiny  
because there was a huge body  
of people within Formula 1  
who still don't believe  
women can do the same job as men.  
I think Formula 1 traditionally  
has been quite a male dominated sport  
but there are so many more women now  
that work um in our sport,  
and that's not just  
in the high profile positions,  
so we've got female engineers,  
female aerodynamicists  
so things are absolutely changing.  
So your father is an icon  
when it comes to Formula 1,  
was it harder to prove your skills  
because you're a woman

or because he's your father?  
Um Formula 1, this role,  
was not my ambition from a little girl,  
however kind of circumstances changed  
and a job became available  
and I was asked to do it, not by my dad,  
um and in fact when he was asked  
he said no way is she working  
for my company.

So if you're,  
in your private life,  
in which situations do you enjoy  
being a woman?

Um...

I get asked  
that female question a lot,  
I was asked it last night at dinner,  
I was asked it in  
four interviews I did yesterday,  
but I still find it quite odd  
that people find it surprising  
that a girl might be doing this job,  
it really kind of annoys me.

Heritage is sort of a nice,  
to-itself department uh...  
we, we have some support  
from people in the factory  
but it's, it's mostly just,  
just me and Dicky so  
yeah it's mostly just, just us here.

Just getting down here to some of  
the bigger components,  
you can see much heavier there,  
they're actually  
buckling the shelves in here.

Oh that box isn't numbered.

Does Claire ever  
come over here Johnny?

No I don't think  
she knows this room exists.

- I don't.

- No?

No, nobody comes over here  
I don't think.

Me and Johnny.

Jonathan wearing his um, Johnny used to like playing soldiers quite a lot.

- How are things?

- Not, not the best.

- Can you talk about that?

- Um...

Um... Johnny is, you know it's um...

I suppose some families just have,

you know, always gonna have

you know some issues

aren't they and um

unfortunately Johnny and I do

um, which I think is something that I will

regret and be very unhappy

about my whole life um...

And is that,

is that to do with work or...?

Yeah. Yeah it is, unfortunately.

Is it because

you got the position that you did and...

- Yeah.

- He didn't.

Yeah, exactly.

Yeah I'm not, I'm not the oldest

and I'm not a boy.

Uh... that's me and Claire.

You two look

pretty close in that one.

That was about 30 years ago

flaughsl.

It's horrible,

he thinks that I was ambitious

and that um I put myself in,

in the position and

you know I lobbied, I,

you know cajoled my way in and

couldn't be the situation... could not

be further from the truth.

It's something their mother

would be deeply unhappy about

and I think it's something

that she could've sorted

um in a way

that probably nobody else could.  
I don't believe Frank could,  
could sort it out.  
I can remember some time in  
1984 and as young children do,  
waking up earlier than their parents  
and just for this man  
with a moustache and uh...  
an accent different to ours,  
obviously being from Birmingham  
just walking past  
and saying good morning  
and it scaring the living life out of us,  
and us both running into  
my parents' room  
and saying there's a man in the house,  
there's a man in the house  
and uh... them saying,  
No, no, no, no it's Daddy's new driver,  
"that's Nigel Mansell."  
The rumours say  
that you might be going to Williams,  
what would you have to say about that?  
Williams? Williams?  
Who are they?.

When Nigel was on top form  
he was as good as any driver  
we've ever had I would say,  
he was hard work out of the car  
but in the car he was,  
he was really superb.

Nigel is three people in one,  
he's an absolutely fantastic racing driver  
who is just astoundingly good  
when it comes to overtaking people.  
And Mansell moves to the  
outside and Mansells going through,  
Nigel Mansell takes the lead  
and neatly boxes Ayrton Senna.

As a family man,  
he's just the nicest guy,  
he's got a lovely family, he adores his  
children, he's faithful to his wife,  
unlike quite a few racing drivers

but as a person out of the car  
he's an absolute arse,  
you know he's just  
a difficult bloke to work with.  
Drive slower, get it together,  
it's a fucking nightmare,  
then someone's...  
And that was why,  
generally speaking,  
we all liked Nelson quite a lot  
and found Nigel a bit too much.  
Nelson Piquet replaced  
Keke Rosberg for '86  
and he was hired because  
Frank loved the idea of Nelson Piquet,  
he had already won  
two world championships  
and he loved  
Nelson's Brazilian flare, his girlfriends,  
the way he looked,  
the way he carried himself.  
He had the private yacht  
and he had a helicopter on the yacht  
and he had a  
citation 10 jet which at that time  
was by far the fastest jet in the world  
and he was flying it.  
Nelson was ebullient, loved life  
and was a very cool guy,  
Nigel was cheese  
and chutney sandwiches  
and hot milk before he went to bed.  
Yes!  
I thought at that time  
Nelson was the best driver in the world,  
so I was thrilled to bits he was coming,  
he was very keen to join Williams  
because he felt that  
we were the quickest.  
Nelson felt  
with that package around him  
he could win  
another world championship.  
We were doing

the last of the pre-season tests,  
"the Paul Ricard Circuit, so we had both  
Nigel Manse" and Nelson Piquet there,  
Frank had come out to the test because  
he was very excited  
about the performance.  
Dad was you know away,  
he was at a preseason test  
and it was a kind of  
spring afternoon and mum  
suggested we go out on some bikes  
and took a little picnic  
and found a field, like you do  
and it was a really lovely day  
and then we just got back  
and waiting for dad to come home  
and, but he never did.  
The test was going very well,  
I think Frank  
was full of the joys of spring  
and thinking, right we're gonna go out  
and show them  
we can win the world championship,  
he was due to run a half marathon  
on the Sunday morning afterwards.  
Frank, keen to get back  
for the half marathon he was doing,  
it was a county half marathon,  
he was that good.  
And so he and Peter Windsor  
who was the marketing guy at the time,  
they went to the airport.  
And he had his Avis Ford Sierra...  
and he said Right c'mon, let's go.  
And then a spot of get-home,  
have you ever heard of get-home-itis?  
When you wanna just get home?  
You've gotta get home, must do,  
must catch the last flight.  
He took a little twiddly road  
down through the back of the circuit  
and it was a very, very twisty,  
narrow road.  
And he was in this 1600 Sierra,

throwing the thing around,  
braking as late as he could  
but I do remember  
saying to Frank at one moment,  
when the back end skipped out  
under braking into a tight left hander,  
uh... Are the brakes ok  
on this thing Frank?  
And he said  
with sort of trepidation,  
Frank do you always drive like this?",  
meaning, and you can't really  
tell your boss this, f-ing well slow down.  
I remember him saying,  
Yeah, the brakes are fine,  
brakes are fine.  
I was rushing  
and rushing and rushing.  
Suddenly we were in clear road,  
the road was downhill  
and there was a fast left hand kink  
about 300 yards ahead of us  
and I remember seeing  
through the windscreen the,  
a stone wall on the inside,  
it looked like we were just gonna hit the,  
the end of this wall and my reaction was  
just to bury myself in the foot well area.  
As we hit the back,  
that wall the car went up in the air...  
...there was just silence,  
just a terrible silence,  
then this massive thump and crash.  
It was you know a real whack  
in my neck sharp, sharp pain, pain.  
It's, rolling over doesn't hurt like this.  
I remember Frank saying  
after about 10 seconds,  
Are you ok? Are you ok?  
I can't move, I'm trapped, I'm trapped,  
get me out, get the ignition off,  
get the ignition off',  
because already  
there was a smell of fuel.



I'm suspended about three,  
four inches from the floor upside down.  
And there was a lot of blood  
because he'd taken  
a direct blow on his head  
when the roof had come down like that.  
Soon as I undid the belt,  
of course I fell on my bleeding head,  
right on my neck again.  
The only thing I could remember  
was to try to stabilise  
his head and neck  
and try to pull him out  
by holding him under the armpits  
and then he started to say,  
You know Peter, I'm a Roman Catholic  
and if anything happens, I want to see  
if you can get the last rites.  
We were just looking at packing up  
when a French youth  
arrived on a moped asking for me  
and he explained that  
Frank Williams had gone off the road  
and wanted some help.  
But Nelson said Oh shit,  
that's a twisty road, I know the road,  
"let's go down and see."  
We didn't know exactly the damage  
but uh...  
Uh... we knew it was  
something very dramatic.  
We raced to the scene  
as quickly as we could  
and at that time Frank's life  
was in the balance.  
And that's when Nigel  
delegated himself really  
to go in the ambulance with Frank,  
basically hold Frank's hand  
and be with him.  
Uh... I had a tremendous fear  
for Frank's safety and,  
and his wellbeing and life at that time.  
So certain people needed to be energised

to do the right thing, quickly.  
But by then it was pretty clear  
that there was a very good chance  
that he's broken his neck.  
When I phoned Patrick Head I told him  
that it looks like, from the x-rays,  
that Frank's spinal column's been cut  
and it was pretty, I think I said to him,  
I think he's' fucked,  
like you know he looked really bad.  
The next day Ginny  
and I flew down to Marseille  
and she was pretty shattered  
but she was a brave woman.  
The first time that I knew  
that things were gonna be really serious  
was when the doctor in charge  
of the intensive care unit  
called Ginny and I into  
his office and said,  
"When do you wanna move  
Frank back to England?"  
Which I immediately  
took to mean they think he's gonna die  
and they don't want him  
to die in their hospital.  
At that stage,  
when Ginny got the message  
that the frogs  
were gonna let Frank die,  
she organised a plane,  
flew him back to Heathrow,  
an ambulance took him  
to the London hospital  
and 20 minutes later he was  
hooked up to English machines  
and he was in  
a shocking state, shocking state.  
The first thing  
that happened to Frank  
was that he had a tracheotomy operation  
in the London hospital  
and the operation went  
well in the sense that

suddenly Frank had relief and he could breathe, he could get the fluid out of his lungs and I remember Ginny learnt how to operate the extraction of the fluid and would help the nurses and was able to do that on her own within a day or two. Her approach was I'm gonna manage these nurses around Frank's bed here the way Frank runs a race team. Ginny was literally his guardian, he clinically died three times and without Ginny jumping on top of him and pumping his lungs out and resuscitating him, not the nurses and the doctors, but Ginny herself, um he would've been dead. I remember I was off one day and Ginny was on duty as she called it. The head of the unit came out and said, Normally Mrs Williams, in this situation, "we would turn the life support off, but we need the family's permission." Did you ever doubt whether Frank should be kept alive? Yeah. Yeah and um I actually said to him, Frank, I'm your best pal and I'd do anything for ya, you want a bag over your head, I'll do it for you", I promise you I said this, I said but you'd have to convince me first "why your kids wouldn't want you around in any condition" and I said, So don't ask me to do anything "that your kids wouldn't approve of." So he said, I won't do that David", that was when he was speaking,

he said I'll never do that."  
So this is a book  
I wrote when I was little.  
I wrote that  
I thought it would be a good idea  
to start a kind of scrap book  
all about my father.  
Above all I wanted somewhere  
to write down all my memories of him  
before my mind had  
the chance to forget them.  
Hopefully I will never forget what  
he used to be like before his accident.  
Everyone thinks their father is the best.  
I'm not an exception.  
"I worship my father.  
It sounds silly but he's my hero."  
I started taking CDs  
and things like that  
for him to listen to,  
to fill in the time a bit,  
because you have to remember  
he was a marathon runner,  
you know he used to run 12 miles  
every day and felt bad if he didn't  
and it was a spectacularly  
big change of life for Frank  
when he had his accident.  
So what, what kind  
of music did you introduce him to?  
Bach.  
Erbarme dich  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
I mean I thought  
that my pal Frank was indestructible,  
you know he got away with everything,  
Frank'll be alright  
but he wasn't on this one  
and Pd go and see him  
three or four times a week,  
I always gave him a kiss, I had to,  
lean over and give him a kiss  
on the forehead  
and say

"Your old mate Brode's here, mate."  
and he used to flicker his eyelids  
at that, he couldn't speak,  
stuff in his mouth, up his nose,  
oh it was a horrible sight.  
Oh there was  
a lot of discomfort  
and pain in the very early days,  
that's inevitable,  
when such a major part of your body  
gets a kick in the arse  
but um I can't say "Oh it was terrible",  
it's not in my mind,  
I don't remember much of it.  
Body's got a great  
many ways of protecting itself,  
when it's in a bit of pain or bother.  
First thing they said,  
Broken your neck, long recovery period,  
how much you'll recover isn't sure,  
of course they knew  
I wouldn't recover uh...  
but you don't quite tell a person  
"when he wakes up  
You're f-ed mate, for good."  
Probably for the first time  
in front of me,  
Virginia, she lost it,  
it was a sort of an awful moment  
and I remember putting my arms  
around her and she was saying.  
Frank's gonna be, he's quadriplegic,  
"he can't walk Jamie,  
he can't do anything."  
And I was saying, It's gonna be ok  
but I had this sort of feeling,  
I wasn't sure at all that  
it was going to be ok.  
For a long time, maybe three,  
four months after the accident,  
there was no real certainty that  
he'd ever be able to leave the hospital  
and to all intents  
and purposes he was dead to the team.

And you know there we were  
with the fastest car,  
we were gonna win all the races,  
we got two fantastic drivers  
and everything was going  
and then all of a sudden the boss,  
the figure head, the main man  
had had this horrific accident  
and it really was a massive change.  
I think then it sort of dawned on us all,  
um, where do we go from here?  
What's gonna happen in '86?  
We await the start of the.  
Brazilian Grand Prix  
and the 1986 season.  
Sadly, Frank Williams,  
boss of the Williams team isn't here  
after a major road accident in France.  
But for the whole team,  
that's an added incentive to do well.  
Well they went to work  
with a vengeance,  
instead of them all  
moping about, they said.  
You tell Frank you don't have to  
worry about a thing here,  
we're gonna win the  
next races for him.  
And it's go.  
A superb start for Nigel Mansell,  
who has already passed Nelson Piquet.  
And it's Senna, Manse, Piquet is  
the running order at the present moment.  
Manselfs touching wheels  
with Ayrton Senna.  
We went to the first race  
and Nigel crashed on the first lap  
whilst trying to overtake Senna  
in a very stupid manoeuvre.  
Mansell appears  
to be out of the race  
so up into second position ifs now  
Piquet and Moretto is up into third place.  
And through

into the lead goes Nelson Piquet,  
Nelson Piquet leads on lap three,  
this one is for you Frank.  
Nelson Piquet wins  
the 1986 Brazilian Grand Prix  
and you will hear  
the crowd go absolutely mad.  
I can say  
it was a very special day for me,  
I think it's a good present for Frank,  
I think he's there  
lying in a bed and uh...  
I think he will  
be happy to watch the race and uh...  
Uh... we hope uh...  
that god help Frank also.  
It was clear we had the best car  
and the only thing that  
was gonna come between us  
and winning the championship  
was lots of intra team rivalry  
between Nelson and Nigel.  
I think that, that was used  
actually to motivate Frank,  
we need you Frank,  
to manage these two guys,  
because there's gonna be problems if,  
if we just let them race free rein  
and we need  
to get on top of this quite quickly.  
Nelson claimed  
that Frank had said  
you will be number one driver,  
you will always have the spare car  
and the team will revolve around you.  
I came there to win the championship,  
I came there as the number one driver.  
Problem was, Nigel didn't sign  
as a number two driver.  
So he drove as fast as he could  
and quite a lot of the time  
that was faster than Nelson was going.  
Nigel used  
to drive straight at him,

because Nigel was pretty aggressive,  
I mean a couple of times  
Nelson said to me  
I had two choices, be second or die.  
I must've been a nightmare  
to drive with as a number two,  
being as quick as I was at times.  
I mean that was horrendous.  
You know, they hated each other.  
Nelson insisted that we went  
into the hospital and saw a,  
an almost dead, croaking Frank.  
Saying, Frank you said  
that this and whatever  
and Patrick is running the team so  
that we're equal number ones with Nigel.  
"And that's what,  
not what you said to me."  
And Frank was, I mean I don't think  
Frank could reply to him.  
He was almost out of it.  
When things didn't go  
as well as they should've for Nelson,  
in other words  
when Nigel was quicker,  
Nelson assumed that  
it could only be because  
Nigel Mansell had  
been given preferential treatment.  
100% the English team  
wanna win the English driver,  
Williams for sure wanted to make  
an English champion, not me.  
Nelson thinks that there was  
a bias towards Nigel  
because he was British.  
I think that's not true, um  
there could've been but Nigel  
was such an arse  
that it was very difficult  
to have a natural bias to him,  
I mean on one occasion, I do remember  
he was whinging about something,  
Oh did you see what he did



to me then?", on the radio,  
and Patrick said, on the radio,  
For fuck's sake, stop whinging Nigel  
and switched his radio off.  
Patrick carried the business  
in my absence, it was very hard on him.  
Paddy was left lumbered,  
an enormous amount of responsibility,  
he wasn't ready for.  
I was up to my eyebrows with two guys  
that both were determined to be  
world champion that year  
and were not gonna take  
for me saying.  
"Sorry I can't make a decent job  
of running your car"  
because I'm too worried  
about Frank Williams so uh...  
It was a very stressful,  
very difficult time in the team.  
And uh... everything went  
completely disaster for me,  
but uh... Frank was not there  
and I couldn't come  
to the hospital and say  
Frank, this has happened this,  
this has happened that, it's not fair,  
his problem was much more  
than my problem.  
Frank was still in intensive care  
and he remained in intensive care  
for quite a time and it was another,  
I think it was 12 weeks  
um before he eventually came home  
but they were the longest weeks  
you could imagine.  
We all were just relieved  
and thrilled that dad made it  
and he was home  
and we got him home.  
Yes it was a very different kind of life  
but we had dad still  
and we were a family still  
and he still had Formula 1

and that's what kept him going.  
Frank Williams is quadriplegic,  
from his shoulders down  
he has no control  
over the functions of his own body.  
Less than six months  
after the accident  
he had ruthlessly  
forced enough movement  
into his partly functioning shoulders  
to push himself along,  
but his arms are just pistons of  
flesh and bones, with no feeling.  
He's paralysed from  
his shoulders literally downwards,  
he can lift his arms  
and he can, for example,  
if he wants  
to scratch him in his face  
he pushes his hands  
against his face um  
but he can't, he can't use his fingers.  
Why does it say  
hell on wheels?  
Um...  
Um it's because Dad's life  
is hell in a wheelchair.  
He's always in  
a lot of pain all the time,  
I don't think people realise that,  
how much pain Frank is in, every day  
of his life, every minute of every day.  
You wouldn't know  
it though would you?  
No you wouldn't think he has anything  
to complain about.  
Dad never does think he has anything to  
complain about.  
That's a lovely picture of mum and,  
well not so good of dad, lovely of mum.  
And what about Ginny,  
how did Ginny react?  
Well it was tough, tough, very tough  
I think. Very tough lady.

Um but she didn't fall apart,  
she took very good care of me.  
It must've been very hard for her,  
suddenly you're not  
a proper husband anymore  
and have to spend a lot of time  
looking after him.  
It's very difficult for anyone  
who hasn't lived with a quadriplegic,  
to know what it's like to almost lose  
your husband but not quite.  
Well their relationship clearly  
was likely to change  
um in that Frank needed care  
at all times of the day and night  
so if it was  
a different kind of life for, for Frank  
it was gonna be an equally different  
kind of life for, for Virginia.  
'I'm not usually given  
to making New Year's resolutions,  
but at the end of 1988 I decided that  
I would spend the following year  
setting down everything  
that has happened to Frank and me  
in the last two decades.  
Both before and after the car accident,  
which left him permanently paralysed  
from the neck down.  
I felt it might act as an exorcism.  
A way to put it all behind me  
and start to look forward again.'  
Reading it, it was like, Jesus Christ,  
she went through this  
and she didn't tell anyone,  
you know she didn't share  
that burden with anybody.  
Why do you think  
she shared it, then?  
She says that it was  
a cathartic exercise for her,  
because Dad's the star isn't he?  
Dad's the one in the spotlight,  
Dad's the one that everyone goes

Frank Williams is amazing,  
Frank Williams is wonderful  
and for all those years  
Mum had been in the background,  
I don't think she did it,  
she didn't wanna do it  
because she wanted fame or adulation,  
she just did it because she wanted to,  
people to know the full story.  
'His memory of the early days  
after his accident is blurred and vague,  
he has never asked me  
what it was like in France  
or in the London hospital  
or what it has been like for me  
these past few years, now he will know.'  
Have you,  
have you read her book?  
No, I don't want to.  
Why do you not want to read it?  
That's a peculiar emotion.  
I think, I would like him to read it,  
um because I think that  
it would be respectful to Mum  
um to understand  
what she did go through but I just,  
you know I think,  
I dunno I just think it's probably  
too much for Dad to read it,  
he doesn't feel any need to,  
but I wish he would.  
Do you think you  
ever will read it?  
Maybe, before I die, but not,  
not imminently that's for sure.  
That picture must be.  
Frank's first Grand Prix  
after his accident,  
big change of life for all of us.  
When Frank appeared in the  
wheelchair the crowd just went crazy.  
It's great fun to be with the team,  
it's great fun to be  
at a race track again.

Back at the track,  
Frank Williams savoured  
his team's success  
for the first time this season,  
Piquet and Mansell took first  
and third places in practice.  
He did have  
a really sort of symbolic visit  
but he was determined to be there  
because he wanted  
the world of Formula 1  
to know that he was still around  
and ostensibly still in control  
but he played no part at all and  
was very much a show appearance.  
But my father only attended  
on the Friday, the practice day  
and that was all  
he was physically up for.  
The lights for red and go!  
And Piquet leads,  
Mansell is second into clearways...  
The two Williams cars  
in their battle for leadership,  
toe-to-toe, eyeball to eyeball,  
almost wheel to wheel.  
Nelson and Nigel  
really, really started  
to slug it out with one another.  
Nigel wasn't afraid to be half an inch,  
an inch away from anybody  
if he had to be, erm, and he was  
and it was serious motor racing between  
the two Williams Honda drivers.  
And there he goes,  
Nigel Mansell  
leads the British Grand Prix  
from the man  
who is his greatest competition.  
Piquet's going for it as they go down  
into the right hander  
at Paddock and Mansell's  
absolutely on the racing line,  
there are no orders between these two.

From the pit wall,  
that was the first time I remember  
not actually enjoying the race  
because I was so sweaty palmed  
as to what might happen  
between the two of them  
and I think Frank  
was back home watching it on TV,  
probably as nervous as the rest of  
the team was at that point.  
Piquet going through on the inside  
but he's gonna be blocked  
"and he has been  
and Manse" holds the lead. Great stuff.  
Nigel Mansell exits the last corner,  
"crosses the line  
and Manse" is the winner.  
Great stuff.  
Wonderful drive.  
Nigel has broken his back,  
he's broken his neck,  
he is now number one  
in the world championship  
and just listen to the crowd.  
After the race it wasn't normal  
for a team manager  
or team representative  
to be on the podium,  
but on this occasion,  
because Frank had been there  
for the test and because it was Nigel  
and because it was Brands Hatch,  
Ginny was invited up,  
to take the Constructor's Trophy  
on behalf of Frank.  
Now behind Alain Prost,  
the woman is Ginny Williams.  
You'll just see her in a minute I expect.  
There's Ginny Williams and,  
and Patrick Head,  
the designer of the  
winning Williams car. Oh what a day.  
And there  
is Ginny holding up the trophy.

To me, that photograph is one  
of my favourite photographs of Ginny  
because she's got this expression  
on her face where it's just like, yes!  
It was a tremendous moment  
because of what  
Ginny had gone through,  
because the accident  
just didn't happen to Frank,  
it happened to everybody  
but the closest person it happened to  
was his dear wife.

Hi Preston.

How we doing

there Jimmy Jock the Noo?

Alright thanks Frank.

Is Biggles under control is he?

Very hard work isn't it?

And the best therapy

Frank ever had

was being back at his desk with a phone

that Nelson gave him actually,

which allowed him to

tap numbers on, big numbers on a pad

and he had a headset on,

make his own phone calls.

Mentally he said,

So long as I'm on the phone, so long as

I can talk, I'm going motor racing.

Basil Hill Road

Mentally, how do you think

the disability has affected Frank?

I did ask, ask him a couple of times

when we,

when we are alone in the car if,

if he sometimes thinks of running again

and stuff like that

but he said he gave

that thought up completely now,

he is completely in peace

with the situation

and I think this is also

what you get from him,

he's not sitting there and thinks

"Oh shit I should have, I should have,  
just got on with it."  
I can truthfully,  
and I'm not bragging,  
I had a major business on my mind,  
a racing team,  
it's like having a hard-on all your life?  
It's like having  
a hard-on all your life?  
Aren't you jealous of what I do?  
Running a Grand Prix team,  
owning a Grand Prix team,  
I run racing cars  
and world famous drivers all of the time,  
it's, I think it's a great privilege.  
You know  
it's Jamie's birthday today dad?  
Dad you need to choose  
which cards you want to give him.  
Is he about 28?  
He's about 32  
actually, dad now, yeah.  
That's my signature..  
It's a bit drunkard but...  
Jamie, you write that, Jamie.  
So dad always gives us money  
for birthdays, all the time.  
Am I giving some money.  
You're giving him money,  
I've organised it.  
- Oh.  
- So dad had his way,  
because he has no idea how,  
the value of money anymore,  
because he hasn't been  
into a shop for about 45 years,  
he would give us all 50p  
so we have to do it for him.  
That, Claire,  
that's absolutely untrue.  
It is true, but you don't really know  
what things cost anymore do you?  
Not really no.  
So how much does



a newspaper cost?

Um up to 15 pence.

15 pence?

I personally just wanted to say,  
along with, I know my dad,  
just thank you so much for all  
the work that you've done  
so far this year.

I know it's been a really, really  
long season for everybody.

I know maybe there's  
a little bit of disappointment  
that we weren't  
a little bit better this year,  
but I think everybody needs  
to really remember where we came from,  
and it's only been two years since  
we were ninth in the championship.

When Williams were third  
in the championship in Abu Dhabi

I went into the garage  
at the end of the race  
and I stood at the back  
until all the TV cameras  
had finished with Claire  
and I said I think mum's in here  
and she's watching over you  
and she's thrilled.

I was just saying to dad,  
it feels like forever  
since she's been gone,  
I think Mum would've been  
a brilliant Team Principal you know,  
I think she would've been probably the  
best Team Principal.

Formula 1 had ever seen  
if you'd just let her,  
I think secretly she  
would've quite liked to have been TP.

Virginia was diagnosed  
with cancer in the summer of 2010,

I think she knew in her  
heart of hearts that  
it was gonna get her and it

was just a question of when.  
She was sort of taken  
for granted in as much as you know  
she was hail, hearty and fit  
and well, and Frank wasn't  
so it was not in anyone's mind I guess  
that she was as vulnerable  
as she obviously was.  
I miss her,  
she was a lovely lady  
and I don't know how Frank copes  
without her because  
he doesn't have a lot of people  
to go home to talk to anymore,  
it's quite sad really.  
I think it affected him  
very deeply um,  
more deeply possibly  
than he would've imagined  
and I think that he probably came  
after her death to realise  
just how much he loved her.  
She was the foundation of.  
Frank's life outside motor racing,  
it was the only thing  
you know and uh... he did say,  
I'm not bothering to go home anymore",  
now Ginny's gone.  
He'd just sleep  
in his flat in the factory,  
he didn't bother to go home,  
why bother'?

I, I kip down the corridor  
most nights of the week.  
Um...

Down the corridor  
in the factory?  
Yeah.

- How are you?  
- Good actually.  
Good.  
It's lovely and warm in here for you Dad.  
I turned the heating up.  
You haven't read

the book, have you, pops?  
No, I must make  
the effort, so, yeah.  
You should, you should make  
the effort, it's an amazing book.  
- So you must read it.  
- Yeah I will, yeah ok.  
You should do,  
although it is quite sad, it is quite sad.  
'Sometimes I dream that Frank  
is running through the Berkshire lanes.  
Everything is alright.  
Early in the morning in that split second  
between sleeping and waking  
I sometimes forget,  
as one might forget what day it is,  
that Frank is paralysed  
then the knife blade of  
reality twists sharply in my stomach,  
jerking me back to the present,  
how must Frank feel in that  
same moment of semi-consciousness?  
What a nightmare to wake up to,  
to be a prisoner within your own body,  
not even to be able to get out of bed  
until someone else moves you.  
Frank also dreams,  
he says that usually in his  
dreams too he is running,  
he has made a magical recovery  
and everyone is astonished  
to see him return to fitness  
and turns to watch  
as he races past them.'  
'We are and always have been two  
quite different characters,  
Frank has never wasted  
his time bemoaning the past,  
it's one of his many strengths, the  
past means nothing to him,  
whether it's a  
world championship won or lost,  
or a road  
accident that crippled him,

it's yesterday, it's boring,  
today and tomorrow are what count.  
I in contrast am happiest with the past,  
I prefer the past to the future  
that frightens me now.  
What happened to my dreams?  
I wanted us to grow old together,  
I wanted to die in Frank's arms,  
I'm gonna start crying.  
'We have both grown  
as a result of the experience,  
but if a fairy godmother offered to  
wave her magic wand  
and take us back to the way things  
were when I first married Frank,  
I would not hesitate for a second,  
I would happily exchange the houses,  
the executive jets,  
the smart hotel rooms, the gold Rolexes  
for just one night in a scruffy bedroom  
anywhere in the world  
with a selfish, funny, unsympathetic,  
unreliable, charismatic man I married.  
I laugh much more than I used to,  
it helps to stop me crying.'

Mm.

- It's so sad.

- Don't start crying.

Mm.

I haven't read it since mum died  
and it's about how she will go  
to her grave heart broken  
over what happened to you.  
You should be very proud.  
What about going to the races?  
Do you think you'll still be able  
to go to the Grand Prix's this year?  
Why not?  
I dunno, doctor's orders?  
I'm fine.  
I mean I'm paralysed but I'm,  
I probably, I spend,  
I haven't had a day off work,  
I don't think

I've had a day off work in years,  
I just don't get ill, never have done.  
Frank's personality hasn't changed,  
what he can physically do has,  
but his approach to his racing,  
his love of Formula 1,  
his obsession with it  
is just the same now,  
as it has been as long  
as I've known him.

So how does  
a man like that retire?  
He's not going to retire,  
he's going to die on the job.  
Well Frank will never stop.

Yeah he will stop  
when he closes his eyes.  
Do you think you'll see  
Williams on top again,  
in your lifetime?  
Yes, certainly possible.