

# 'I SAY IT JUST TO REACH YOU'

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## Do you always speak your mind?

To a degree, yes. That's why I was thrown out of college, why I was always getting expelled. I've been me all down the line. I'm not saying I haven't compromised, but I've been 'Lennon' all down the line. The system had a pretty good go, though. I was at art college and they wanted everyone there to be an art teacher or to go to this section or that section to suit the balance of the system, rather than what I could do. And the same at school. I don't forgive them for that, but it wasn't each teacher's fault, it was the system's. So I'm against the system and the education 'period', but it's no good just smashing down the school. I agree with all this taking the schools over even if you take them over for the whole year, and never let any tutors in. You don't need them. If you want to learn all that crap, you can get it out of books, if you really want to learn it. So that kind of smashing up I agree with.

I've always said, 'don't drop out, man'. Just stay in and subvert it. I mean that's what we did as Beatles, subvert, even if we nearly got submerged while we were doing it. We got an M.B.E. which is probably one of the biggest jokes in the history of this island, probably. But *that's* subversion and *that's* revolution.

Everyone has just suddenly noticed the system in the last few years, but all the greats of the past like Kafka, Joyce, Shaw — they knew where it was at, they just did their work, and they changed it by doing their work; none of them were out hustling and wrestling and attacking people. The point is, change your head. The system is a load of crap, but smashing it up is not going to do it. All I'm saying is I think you should change things by changing people's heads. They're saying that we should smash the system, but the smashing scene's been going on

for ever, what's it done? The Irish did it, the Russians did it, the French did it, and where's it got them? Nowhere.

I believe in Humanity. I think we're great. We've just got to find it out, and if this is the time we've got to find it out, it seems the beginning of it. There was some guy on T.V. last night saying "Now this is Venus, and this is the Moon", "This is how it looks" and "the Russians landed one there". They spend all that time getting to the moon and they don't know what's going on in their heads. This is the time people are discovering that it's all in your head, and Venus is in your bloody head and so is the Moon, and you don't need a rocket to get there.



I think the world is on a trip. And on record — I must relate to our records because that's what I've done — we went through the tribal childish bit in the early records; the self-conscious bit with Rubber Soul, say pre-Pepper, coming right out at Pepper, and now unselfconscious as you can get, relatively speaking. I think as far as humanity is concerned we've been the childish bit and now we're suddenly becoming aware of something — becoming self-conscious and going through all the hassles of being self-conscious, where

you're so self-conscious you can't do anything. And then to come out of that is the next age, which I think we're going into — being self-conscious but realising that you can handle it, and that this is the breakthrough. It'll be the end of the trip — if it was a good trip. The whole universe is one big trip, and we've got to get hung up about what we're going through now and how we arrived at it; how they cocked Christianity up, Buddhism etc. — They, they — but we'd do it; we did it if you believe in reincarnation, it was us then anyway. We've all done it, we've been them all. We've been the fascists and we've been everything, and now we're too self-conscious of what we did with the basic thing we had. Now we've got to put it in perspective. We can have cars and tellys and that, but still get back to the spiritual bit, which is the bit we've missed out.

I've met no happy people in one bag another like rich or poor, and I've never met anyone completely happy, because I don't believe it exists. I think you can reach a certain state of consciousness — I don't know whether you can make it in this life. All the Buddhas and Jesuses, all the great ones that

were pretty hip consciouswise — I don't think they had complete happiness, but I think complete happiness is when you *are* a piece of electricity, when you've made the Absolute like the Buddhas or whatever it is, say. And then the concept of what we think of happiness is just being, which is what happiness would be for all of us. I've had that through meditation, just a state where you're just not aware of anything — so there you've been, and that's complete happiness — you just are. That is the piece of happiness we're all looking for — just to be. Nothing affects you and you affect nothing, literally. The happiest people are just those who are



do something else. I just could not stop myself creating because I'm creating a lot more than the records. Just with Yoko and things all the time. I can't stop, that's my gig. And I've always done it, as a kind it was making puppets or drawing or writing poetry — that's my gig on earth, to turn out all this stuff, and I'll turn it out regardless of what anybody says or thinks about it. On the latest album we rid ourselves of the self-conscious bit; we were doing what we had done earlier on but with a better technique of recording. Like some of the tracks are just straight takes of us, playing "Yer Blues" was recorded in a smaller room for a change from the big studio, — we just did it. And "I will", "Julia" and all them, it's just us singing like that. The technique makes it just a bit better than just singing in the early days. If we did the first album again with "Twist and shout" and all the others on, it would be the same, but we sounded more like us on this record than we do on the first one. That's how we played, just heavy rock. But when it was put down on the early records, there was never enough bass in it, the guitar solo never came through and generally we just didn't know about recording. So now we know how to record a bit.

## Do you think there is any danger of Apple developing into just another hierarchical organisation?

There is a danger of creating that. But we're just not going to do it. The thing about Apple originally was that we could control our own records completely and then we had the idea, 'If we could do this and

that etc.' and we tried to do a million things at once. But it was all idealism and now we've just got to get a record company and possibly electronics with this guy who seems to be turning out this stuff. It's down to that now. In the next 3 months we either make or break and it'll either collapse and we'll all be broke and it'll make everyone happy because they'll think we're ethnic again and acceptable — or it'll break even. And it'll be a record company where we can get all the records from America through that we want — because all these people want to be with us. Just to have control of our own records, just to channel some things through. We still have to go through E.M.I. to a certain extent because of the 9 year contract, but some kind of thing for the workers; and we are the workers, to control what we put out, that's all we're trying to do. Apple hasn't made any profit yet. It's just a complete loss. It's one of the biggest laughs to the Establishment, because the real establishment are dying for it to break. They don't want anyone like us on the scene.



## Do you care if it breaks?

I care if it breaks because our idealism is real and we'd like it to be something that helps other people as well as ourselves, bringing out records that people want. If it breaks it breaks — Obla-di — Obla-da — and that's my attitude all down the line, whatever will be; but not the bit about sitting in the shit accepting the will of Allah — because you do have a choice of some kind. But it's not going to break me — I'm not Apple. I wonder what that guy will say when the Stones record company comes out — they've got an Apple round the corner from us — Mother Earth.

## Do you think that the fact that you were 'friends' with the Establishment led you to being busted?

Probably. Earlier on, the moptop thing was preventing me getting busted, because we were open about it years ago; it was common knowledge. I don't know the reason why they suddenly busted me, probably because I've been waving my flag a bit that's all, like "Two Virgins" and other things. But this "Black Dwarf" guy is one of these 'the Stones are changing it and you're not' types. In fact the Stones and I are great mates. But the Stones did pull back their album cover so tell him that. It's not against Mick, it's against him. I'm sick of these petty comments — it's been going on for years; it used to be 'the Stones do this and you do that' with the fans and that. But now it's all down to these revolutionaries. The

Stones and I are close. He talks about the stones and the Who, how they came bursting out; he's forgotten to mention that if it wasn't for us, the Stones and Who wouldn't have been allowed out. Amazing. These people are no bitter, they're holding the whole thing back. They show with what they write and how they say it, how they can never run a new scene, because even before we've done anything, they're already quibbling about who's doing what and who's the ethnic one and who isn't. And let them go and talk to the Stones, The Who, Dylan, me Yoko, Andy Warhol, anybody that's doing anything, doesn't think like this. That's what none of them can understand. Before anything has moved forward even half an inch, there are fools like this trying to get it into a new bag before we've even burst the old bag.



'being' more times a week than anyone else, and it's just down to that. I mean you can get it with music, painting — we've had it playing — every time you have a good session, the musicians are just out of it. They're just being — there's nothing hassling you or anything. You can get it writing, daydreaming or anything. I remember having it as a kid on a desk, or on the grass in the sun — just for a moment — but you'd always fight back — that's the whole trouble — even when you're doing meditation with the expressed purpose of getting into that state, you've got to practice it like you practice anything to stop getting frightened when you get there. You're fighting all the time in the different levels of meditation, for instance; the whole time is spent just trying not to be frightened of anything.

#### Are you an optimist?

I vary, I'm still a cynic, but I will it and want it to be the age ... the student bit; and we do stand a better chance now just because we can communicate with Czechoslovakia and everything and touch them a bit, even if it's just from a record or a poster or whatever. So I can't believe we can all get beaten down again with that much communication between us. It can only get better. The Christians and Buddhists all said it gets better, but after you're dead, I believe that too. I believe in reincarnation, and I believe that each time it's better. Even if you had a shit time this time, the next time will be a little less shit; it's like one bloody big exam, and that's the drag really, it just goes on and on and on. There's no quick way out like suicide or anything. You've got to go through it. You can't forget it, I've tried that one; and you just can't do it in a sort of 'holy buzz', I've tried that one; and I've tried the other one when I was younger, just complete smash — let's smash it and kick it down and then see what happens. I believe the Universe is your head, literally, in your head. O.K. physically we're insignificant when you look around to the size of it, but the physical bit is a load of crap, it's just like

worrying about your car and forgetting the driver. The driver's the bit, and that's your soul. It's universal, omnipresent and all the rest of it. And you can realise it, and if you realise it once, you remember when you realised it before as a child, or any time in your life; and it's there. People can become aware of this with acid, meditation and macrobiotic diet; that's what I'm doing now, and the combination of everything is the best thing I've come across so far. I haven't changed but it's like this; you know the day you're O.K. and you're at 100% potential and you can handle whatever the situation is. Now those days were rare when I was a student, or a "moptop", when I thought 'everything's O.K. and I can handle it', but when I got on to acid I thought 'Aha, it is O.K., and I can handle it,' and the ratio of good days was just a bit better, but it was still a lot of hassling. Then meditation came along, and that worked alright, and I could handle each day better, but it was still a lot of hassling. Then the India thing came along, and I had a great experience over there, I was meditating 8 hours a day, and it was really some trip, like acid was nowhere. Just sitting there, muttering some word in a room was the biggest trip I've ever had in my life. But when I came home, I didn't get back into it regularly. Then Yoko tried to turn me on to this macrobiotic scene. I wasn't too keen at first, but it was the same with meditation — 2 years reading about it and then I tried it. With macro it was about 1½ years reading about it, then I tried it, 2 or 3 months ago, and 'I can tell you folks', the effect on you, in 3 days time, is you're in a completely different scene; and every day is a better day. The thing about macro-diet is the yin-yang principle, cleaning out your system both mentally and physically. And it works. We did ten days rice diet pure, and at first you think, 'You can't do that, you can't do that', but it's not like giving up cigarettes or anything you're hooked on; you're not really hooked on that slush you're eating. And once you start looking into what you're eating — just look at the food in cafes, Typhoo tea etc., just look at every-

thing. It says, 'with govt. sponsored chemicals or something. And tell the next guy to start moaning about the system and to revolt by stopping eating what the system's feeding him which is keeping him in a state which makes him think that that's all that's going on. If his mind was open and clear enough to see what was really going on, he'd stop eating the shit he's eating because government sponsored shit is what they're feeding you. The diet really did it, like a complete overhaul. A complete overhaul of the body and mind. On the 3rd day you get headaches, and it's just all the shit coming out. And the food tastes bloody marvellous because you adjust your whole system and taste and everything. I think things like that can do it; simple, basic things like changing what you eat. Because they're all on about the mental propaganda — we're all aware of that, but they want to get hip to the propaganda that's going on inside your body. I was a vegetarian for 2 years before I started the macro bit — but I didn't want to eat meat, for the animal reason I just didn't want meat if you are what you eat, I don't want to be a pig or a cow, as simple as that. I believe in the vibrations of the animal coming off on you. You may think that when you talk, that's the end of the sound vibration you make, but I believe that when you talk, it sets up a vibration that goes on infinitely: it just goes on and on and on. — So every thought-wave you have just goes on and on and on. It just doesn't end here because we can't hear it or see it or smell it. So any vibration an animal has dying in fear or whatever situation it died in I believe will rub off on you. O.K., so it's a lot of hokey-pokey and magic, but I believe in that too. I believe in everything till it's disproved.

#### So there's no dichotomy anywhere, everything's joined?

Yes, I believe that thing which joins together is that thing they call God; I believe there are people nearer and further away from the

power source, but I believe God is the omnipresent thing that joins everything together. It's just a powerhouse and "we're all a set of light bulbs". But I believe in electricity even though I can't see it: I can see the light bulb like I've seen a few people who you feel that they're a bit nearer to whatever's going on. It's hard to describe, but they've all said it in the past and they're still saying it, but it's getting to be language you can relate to. The point is, we all really know the compromise we're all talking about is the one where you 'sell out'. Everybody thinks everybody else has sold out, but there's even guys in business that don't think they've compromised and they haven't really. They're secretly trying to do what everyone else is trying to but they don't know it half the time. I was talking to that guy Lord Beeching and I was saying, "We want help with this Apple but we don't want any of 'them' — we're idealists". I was giving it straight, saying how we want a happy office and all that. But, he rightly said, 'Listen, man, they're not a complete set of fascists; there's one or two human beings in the City'. Which I hadn't allowed for in my great open-minded awareness and all that. I just hadn't allowed for any human beings in the banks or anywhere — but there are some human beings there; there's probably some in the Government, though I still find it hard to believe that somewhere in that pile of slush there might be. There are people everywhere of the same mind and it's just that... even among ourselves we can't communicate, which is the hard bit — amongst the people that really agree.

If people were just different regardless of what material things they have, they'd see what material things are anyway. Even if you go to some village without materialism or an African tribe, they have got exactly the same psychological troubles, everything we've got, — maybe a bit less to a different degree, but they're going through the same uptight, the same little bitchiness, the same 'he's got three fingers and I've got ten'.

We're just going through it on a grander scale, because it is a grander village and it's a big tribe. But I think people are people anywhere, going through the same bit. There's no haven we can create by going back to the soil bit and forgetting about cars and telly, and that'll be the cure. It's just down to yourself, and your relationship to the next person — and it can only work on that scale. There'll be no mass changes of things by getting rid of materialistic goods and saying 'now we're alright, now the government isn't telling us to buy this and that. I'm anti-indoctrination and you should have this and have that'; and there ought to be some sort of perspective put on; what you need and not what people imagine is needed. I've found out by having it. It took me having it, not by any other way, to find out you don't need it. My goal in life wasn't to succeed and have ten cars and a house on the stinking hill; but there was always that 'I'm going that way — I wouldn't mind'. That's one thing I was taught as a kid — one of my aunts used to say, "I'd sooner be miserable in comfort". I was all for that, but you either hang on like a maniac as many do, and die with it — all that rubbish — or you realise where it's at. And it is Nowhere.

#### Why do you think people want to be rich?

Well, I wanted to be rich because I was relatively poor and thought that riches would get me out; but it only got me out of Liverpool — it didn't get me out of my mind or body. Whether I would have started meditating and macrobiotic food, acid etc. and all the trips I've been through in the past two years, I probably would have done it rich or poor, and then wouldn't have bothered to try and make money — but I didn't try too hard; it just so happened that my gimmick was the one that earned money. I used to think anybody can write songs and be a pop star — I think we even said it in 'The Beatles Book' last year by Hunter Davies — I've changed that much since then because I don't believe it now. I made it because I'm me

and I have that thing that makes that music and makes those songs up I believe everybody has got something, it's just they've got to bring it out. The job I've chosen to do is write and record songs. It's my job. When I say I wrote "Good morning, good morning" and didn't enjoy it. I mean I didn't enjoy it as a whole, it was a job of work. But I got enjoyment from it, you can still have enjoyment from doing it. But you can't pin people down on every little thing that's said in print like that. Like this guy in 'Black Dwarf' says it was a 'con' job. Now I say it is a con job in the terms of reference I'm using, like when I say Picasso was conning them and so was Beethoven both having a laugh up their sleeves; because they were. Anybody that's as great as they were, knows where it's at, and they know that it's all drivel like the stuff that's written about our songs and the Stones and Dylan and all that. Dylan knows where it's at in regard to our songs and what people liked about them and that is the 'con' job. And if someone gets uptight about me putting "wobble of a grapefruit" in the middle of a song just for a laugh or because I liked the sound of "wobble of a grapefruit", well, to me that's a con, because I know that Thomas Mann or somebody might have written something like that

seriously and he'd probably be right about the sense of rhythm in the line, but I put it in for a laugh, and that's a con job. So I don't think that 'con' is a derogative word.

#### Do you have any sense of coming to an end, as far as your music is concerned?

No man, look — we haven't even started. We keep saying this, there's no end to it. There is no end and there's no beginning. There's just every possibility, combination of sounds on earth open to us and anybody who cares to listen. Just what's going on now — to me that's a record, this whole bit. We've got all that to work on. There's no bag to put it in, it just goes on and on and on. The only end I can see is if I get fed up of doing it, or I want to