

TRANSKRYPCJA NAGRAŃ

TASK 1.

It was one of those mornings when the early mist hung in wet sheets across the valley under a band of bright blue sky and, by the time we came home from walking, the dogs were sleek with damp, whiskers glittering in the sun. They saw the stranger first, and pranced around him pretending to be fierce.

He stood by the swimming pool, fending off their attentions with a handbag of masculine design and backing ever closer to the deep end. He seemed relieved to see us. “Dogs all right, are they? Not rabid or anything?” The voice was recognized as that of our telephone caller, Tony from London, and he and his handbag joined us for breakfast. He was large and prosperously padded around the waistline, with tinted glasses, carefully tousled hair and the pale-coloured clothes that English visitors wear in Provence regardless of the weather. He sat down and produced from his bag a bulging Filofax, a gold pen, a packet of duty-free Carter cigarettes, and a gold lighter. His watch was also gold. I was sure that gold medallions nestled in his chest hair. He told us he was in advertising.

He gave us a brief but extremely complimentary account of his business history. He had started his own advertising agency, built it up, and had just sold a controlling interest for what he described as heavy money and a five-year contract. Now, he said, he was able to relax, although one would never have guessed from his behaviour that he was a man who had left the cares of the office behind. He was in a constant fidget, looking at his watch, arranging and rearranging his trinkets on the table in front of him, adjusting glasses and smoking in deep, distracted drags. Suddenly, he stood up. “Mind if I make a quick call? What’s the code for London?”

My wife and I had come to expect this as an inevitable part of welcoming the Englishman abroad into our home. He comes in, has a drink or a cup of coffee, he makes a phone call to check that his business has not collapsed during the first hours of his absence. The routine never varies, and the substance of the call is as predictable as the routine. “Hi, it’s me. Yes, I’m calling from Provence. Everything okay? Any messages? Oh. None? David didn’t call back? Oh shit. Look, I’ll be moving around a bit today, but you can reach me on (what’s the number here?) Got that? What? Yes, the weather’s fine. Call you later.”

Tony put the phone down and reassured us about the state of his company, which was managing to stumble along without him. He was now ready to devote all his energies, and ours, to the purchase of a holiday property.

TASK 2.

Five years ago broadcaster Sheena McDonald suffered massive head injuries. After a long painful journey to rebuild her shattered life and personality, she asks herself if she can ever be the same person she used to be.

Sheena McDonald:

I am not a neuro-scientist but you could say I have coal-face expertise, because I am a survivor of head-injury. I suffered such a severe head-injury that the medical profession thought that surviving at all was as much as could be expected. Just over a year after the injury, a doctor described me as "a walking miracle" – and I was still in primary recovery. Five years on, I'm very much better. And given that the professionals are surprised – to the best of my knowledge, "miracle" is not a clinical term – I now have a layman's obsession to understand as much as I can about how the brain works – and how mine defied convention.

Of course, given the nature of my condition, my claimed expertise and authority is tempered by the practical reality of being traumatised. In other words, I remember nothing about what happened to me. So I rely on others' memories and experience. I have been a journalist for more than 20 years. This is a classic journalistic exercise: to hunt for the truth after the event.

This is why documentary-maker Roger Grafton persuaded BBC Four and BBC Scotland to commission a documentary about what happened to me. The documentary is called *Who Am I Now?* – and, neurologically, that question makes perfect sense, as I discovered in the making of the programme.

I was hit by a police van while I was crossing the road. It was late at night and raining. The van was travelling on the wrong side of the road. I was taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital's Accident and Emergency Unit. Intubation was carried out to allow assisted ventilation because I couldn't breathe for myself. My brother came to see me the next day, so I asked him what he saw. I'd never wanted to go back to these lost days and weeks before, but now I was interested. He said I was in a coma and he was worried that I would never be myself again. And for a long time I wasn't. I suffered five or six weeks from what's called post-traumatic amnesia.

Conventional neurological wisdom insists that such a period of amnesia inevitably changes the sufferer. My consultant neurologist at the time spelled this out to me all too clearly. I was shocked. I was so determined to recover fully that I found it impossible to believe that I was not myself. But that was only the start. It has taken me years to recover to the degree I have. Doctors used to think recovery stopped after a few months, but I'm a living proof that this is not so.

Making this film has taught me a great deal. I think it is not typically Scottish to talk or ask questions about oneself, so doing it for this documentary revealed how I was and am perceived by friends and relatives and strangers – and I was often surprised.

I am convinced that I am myself, and those bold enough to hire me to do what I used to do – that is reporting major events – seem satisfied that this person called Sheena McDonald is as good as ever.

TASK 3.

A new survey has shown that listening to certain pieces of music while driving may be more dangerous than listening to others. The most dangerous five, apparently, are Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, *Firestarter* by the Prodigy, *Red Alert* by Basement Jaxx, *Insomnia* by Faithless and Verdi's *Requiem*. The safest tunes, meanwhile, are Gary Jules's *Mad World*, Lemar's *Another Day*, Sugababes' *Too Lost in You*, Blue's *Breathe Easy* and Norah Jones's *Come Away With Me*. We've asked DJs from five different radio stations what they make of that.

SPEAKER A

There's no doubt that music can affect people's lives. But it's not up to me to make people drive sensibly – hopefully they've got enough brain power to drive safely on their own. I've just looked at the list of good tunes, and I'm pleased to say that they're all our station's big hits. Luckily, I don't think we play any of those five on the bad list.

SPEAKER B

I think it makes perfect sense. I remember reading a story a while ago that when McDonald's want people to eat quickly they play them very pumping music, so it seems reasonable that it would have a similar effect on you in the car and the way that you drive. I wasn't really surprised when I read the article. To my knowledge we've never been responsible for any accidents. I think if the music you're listening to can put you in a good mood then you're going to be a nicer driver. And I think there are other stations that need to be more worried about this than we do.

SPEAKER C

I was surprised by some of the songs that were on there. I mean Basement Jaxx's *Red Alert* was one of the songs it says that you can't play, and I think it's a great drive-home tune. I think that if you've had a tough day at work then an upbeat song is great because it cheers you up. I would have thought that songs that are slower, if you're not mixing them with anything upbeat, would be a bit depressing.

SPEAKER D

When we were first trying to work out what we should be doing with the drivetime slot, and how much people wanted to be stimulated, then the overwhelming response was that people wanted relaxing stuff that would de-stress them while they were driving. I remember that *Classic* commissioned a survey to find out how people responded to more vibrant classical music, stuff that's louder or more rhythmic. The responses came back that no matter how loud a piece of classical music was, it didn't produce a similar reaction to, say, a piece of rock or dance. It's because it's not amplified and it doesn't have the same beat behind it.

SPEAKER E

We play quite a lot of dance music, like Basement Jaxx's *Red Alert*, which is definitely one of those ones where you're driving along in the car, tapping along to the steering wheel, and you find yourself singing along to it. I can well believe that the attention span does lapse, slightly, but it's never crossed my mind to moderate what I play. Drivers are a major part of our station's listeners. I've never noticed any correlation between my playing loud, banging music and people calling in with accident reports, but now it's something I'll watch out for.