

Desert Island Triggers

by [Robert Gear](#) (February 2020)



The Dance, André Derain, 1906

The BBC radio (née wireless) program *Desert Island Discs* has been a staple of UK broadcasting since 1942 when it first appeared on the BBC *Forces* Program. According to Wikipedia, over 3000 episodes have been recorded. Each week a guest, called a 'castaway' is asked to choose eight recordings (usually, but not always, of music), a book (The Bible and Shakespeare are always provided), and a luxury item that they would take if they were to be cast away on a desert island.

They do this whilst discussing their lives and the reasons for their musical and literary choices. The castaways are people known in their fields whether in the public eye or not. They range over the gamut of worthies from better or lesser known popular musical performers to scientists, academics, writers, celebrities (slebs) of one sort or another and possibly the occasional busybody. I believe that even one or two royals, Her Majesty excepted, of course, have permitted themselves to be interviewed. Some of the interviewees from a bygone era may have faded from the memory of all bar the most dedicated specialist, although the presenters themselves, in their time at least, have become household names in Britain at least.

An interesting experiment could be conducted whereby a guest decides that their choices would encompass a range of what are now deemed politically incorrect recordings. Would the BBC executives permit such deplorable tastes to air and offend the ears and brains of a portion of the country-wide audience? I think we know the answer. After all, those who stage manage our tastes and manufacture consent have been to university, and therefore know and believe in all that is virtuous and right.

Public spaces and private are filled today with vile spasms of recorded vulgarity which are often played *ad nauseam*, and filled with rhetorical infelicities of less than endearing import. Experience shows this to be more distressingly palpable in the UK than in the USA, at least to the present time. While offensive to normal people, both in the choice of lyrics and often in the jarring musical accompaniment, such recordings are presumably valued by certain youthful sections of the listening public. But from this we must pass on, gathering our robes tightly about us and flinching like respectable visitors navigating the sidewalks of San

Francisco.

[Read more in *New English Review*:](#)

- [Michel Houellebecq's *Serotonin: A Novel*](#)
- [Reflections on Initiation](#)
- [The Inverted Age](#)

I had occasion to remark on this peculiar addiction to both the bilious sounds combined with a volume level that was almost insupportable, when my wife and I visited the branch of a well-known and world-wide purveyor of caffeinated beverages in a city in the west of England. My wife, who is on occasion bolder than I am in such things, asked the barista (such they are named, in order I presume to excite an Italianate, and hence faintly exotic *sensazione*) if he would mind turning down the volume 'a bit' since it was rather loud. The response was sullen, even peevish, and remarkably unbaristical, if I may coin a term. The volume decreased, but after some time began to creep up again, whether because a member of the caffeine-drinking public had protested or the server had decided to indulge righteous annoyance, I do not know.

I mention this, to point out that we can all be offended by things heard. More mature audiences often find gibberish enshrouded in cacophony an unremitting nuisance. The recent crops of graduates and indeed their mentors, "the academic rabble" (as Harold Bloom has dubbed many of those who manufacture their opinions), find a completely different range of words and ideas by which to be offended. Nowadays, something called *intersectionality* being the order of the day, we can never be sure whom we are offending, and indeed, as Douglas Murray points out in *The Madness of Crowds*, many sections of the grievance industry can be aggrieved by other sections in a bewildering hodgepodge of twittering.

But, as an exercise in annoying all the best people, and most especially the claques of radfems, I suggest the broadcasting of a politically incorrect edition of *Desert Island Discs*. Alternatively, the transmission could be offered to those attending the funeral for a dearly departed sister. I am not making any claim for the musical value of any of these choices, just for their potential for needling the people whose antics and disposition most deserve needling.

I arrived at this idea whilst on a recent midwinter road trip across Middle America. My vehicle tuned in to a station that played what the announcer called 'pure oldies,' by which was meant popular recordings made between the early 1950s and early 1970s; the mid-point of the selections being around the time of the Beatles first LP, as Larkin put it. I discovered that the lyrics of many or most of the proffered sounds would madden even more than usual the enraged element of our sistren. These folk appear miserable already; and it would surely increase the merriment of the larger public to make them more so. Here are just three of the recordings I heard played on that bleak winter's day. The lyrics of these songs were penned before the tsunami of sheer vulgarity currently on display, and for the most part they are just playfully and toxically "chauvinistic."

My first choice is "Shake, Rattle and Roll" (1954). This song was most famously performed by Bill Haley and the Comets. Here is a verse that is sure to elicit wailing from some portion of the sisterhood.

Get out from that kitchen

And rattle those pots and pans
Get out from the kitchen
And rattle those pots and pans
Well, roll my breakfast
'Cause I'm a hungry man.

Why don't the lyrics say "Get back in the kitchen?" To me that would make a lot more sense, but I suppose pots and pans can be rattled whichever way one collides with them. Perhaps the spousal cook is also serving the man, who is outside the kitchen, waiting ravenously, slumped with beer in hand, face glued to a 17-inch black and white television set.

Another airing was "Under My Thumb" (1966) performed by the Rolling Stones. The lyrics of this song have always stood out as wonderfully improper in the best sense of the word.

It's down to me
Yes it is
The way she does just what she's told down to me
The change has come
She's under my thumb
Ah, ah, say it's alright.

What could be more calculated to make today's Women's Studies'

trainees cry? Why Mick Jagger hasn't been cast into oblivion for vocalizing this nice bit of calculated toxicity, I don't know.

Another song, aired as I was cruising along somewhere between Sioux City and Omaha was a real gem. The words are both prescient and touching. It is called "I'm a Boy" by The Who. Who, yes who, would believe that Pete Townsend, the author, might be a prophet at least fifty years ahead of his time? Here are the lyrics, more or less in full:

One girl was called Jean Marie

Another little girl was called Felicity

Another little girl was Sally Joy

The other was me, and I'm a boy

My name is Bill, and I'm a head case

They practice making up on my face

Yeah, I feel lucky if I get trousers to wear

Spend evenings taking hairpins from my hair

I'm a boy, I'm a boy

But my ma won't admit it

I'm a boy, I'm a boy

But if I say I am, I get it

Put your frock on, Jean Marie
Plait your hair, Felicity
Paint your nails, little Sally Joy
Put this wig on, little boy

I wanna play cricket on the green
Ride my bike across the street
Cut myself and see my blood
I wanna come home all covered in mud

I'm a boy, I'm a boy
But my ma won't admit it
I'm a boy, I'm a boy

This song was a big hit in 1966, about a half century before we were told to shut up and do as we're told regarding the mostly tragic instances of gender dysphoria. Clearly, the boy's mother in the song suffers from Munchausen by Proxy (now called 'Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another' (FDIA)). The popularity in our own time for engendering gender dysphoria in the unsuspecting young is cleverly foreshadowed. The song could also be construed as an anthem for doomed youth (male and white) now so piously fomented by elements of the more crazed left. While clearly not sharing the poetic brilliance of Wilfred Owen's sonnet "Anthem for Doomed Youth," the parallels are not difficult to discern. We currently have our

own “shrill, demented choir of wailing shells.”

A song by a group called “The Royal Teens” (yeah, me neither) was aired as I drove on somewhere between Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska. The lyrics, such as they are, fronted a weirdly earwormish stridency.

Hey, man, dig that crazy chick!

Who wears short shorts?

We wear short shorts

They’re such short shorts

We like short shorts

Who wears short shorts?

We wear short shorts

And so on. I can’t say this song is especially enjoyable; but if the purpose is to annoy those who wear textiles shaped like female sexual organs on their head, it does its job admirably. Sometimes, cutting off one’s nose to spite one’s face feels legitimate.

Indeed, there are many, many, songs that can be calculated to annoy leftists. Interested readers can name their own favorites. I certainly wouldn’t miss out on playing “Baby You Can Drive My Car,” (Lennon and McCartney, 1965). This nicely offends the right people, and gets bonus points for

encouraging the use of fossil fuels. And what about the 1960 (Vance and Pockriss) hit song "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polkadot Bikini?" The lyrics of this recording would get these same offendees flapping like wildfowl on your neighbor's fishpond. My selection here would also include "America, The Beautiful," by Katherine Lee Bates and "God Bless America" by Irving Berlin. Patriotism, according to our betters, being just Nazism or something, these songs should really get their goat. Which, to repeat, is the idea.

You are probably thinking that not one of the above choices will annoy paid up members of a large and still growing peace cult. But, here's the rub. Many of the peace-spreading devotees have no love for music of any kind at all. Disputes within the Ummah are ongoing about whether music, instrumental or vocal, is haram, just reprehensible (makruh) or even permitted. Suffice it to say that the more extreme salafists consider music to be completely taboo, basing their rejection on the Luqman (Surah 31) and Al-Isra (Surah 17) surahs as confirmation. The Sunnipath Online Islamic Academy is adamant on this issue, but there is little value here in raising this old cadaver. Any musical noise (not just a noisy noise) might annoy that particular oyster.

Castaways are asked to name one luxury item to bring with them to the desert island. There is plenty to choose from here. One possible pick would be a gas guzzling vehicle. Wouldn't it be satisfying to increase one's "carbon footprint" even while marooned on a desert island? There are plenty of thirsty vehicles to select from, as a cursory glance around any North American parking lot makes clear. However, on second thoughts, it would be difficult to refill the tank of whichever vehicle is chosen. So something with greater utility is in order. On a desert island, many occurrences are unexpected; they might be

giants, wild beasts or even strange pink-haired fowl lighting upon palm trees. I suggest a powerful weapon such as the much-hated AR15 with several thousand rounds of ammunition. An online discount retailer describes the AR15 as follows:

The AR-15 is America's most popular rifle for good reason. The modular platform makes it easy to configure your gun your way. The AR15 has proven itself reliable, rugged and accurate, making it a go-to choice for home defense, competitive shooting, and more.

What's not to like?

[Read more in *New English Review*:](#)

- [Old Books and Contemporary Challenges](#)
- [Libraries That Don't Respect Books](#)
- [The Mob of the Invisible](#)

Books, apart from the Bible and Shakespeare? First of all, neither of these will be well liked by the people whose wrath we are trying to incite. Some contend that many of those who have studied literature at some of the more prestigious tertiary-level hangouts will have read neither. If they have, it will have been through the prism of some meritless postmodernist drudge. So the Bible and Shakespeare will already annoy them aplenty. Choosing one more book is not easy though. For example, you might think that *The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling* would really provoke the gnashing of teeth, but due to the poor dears' lack of historical background, the contents would baffle them. But we are not asking the radio audience to read anything—only to listen to our justification for choosing.

Whatever the choice, however, the main thing is to find a way to force the leftist to read through anything they dislike (or don't understand) from beginning to end, and then to start again from the beginning in an indefinite Sisyphean struggle. Now, economics not being their cup of tea (and really, it isn't), then, perhaps *Human Action* by Ludwig von Mises would serve the purpose of inciting bafflement. As in Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* in which Tony Last (love the name), marooned in the Amazon rain forest with the illiterate Mr. Todd ('death' in the German tongue?), is forced to read aloud the entire *oeuvre* of Charles Dickens. As I recall, when he arrives at the end of the mammoth task, Mr. Last is forced to start from the beginning again. And here is where the luxury item, the AR15, comes in handy. Let us assume that a member of the pink-headed rabble has somewhat fortuitously alighted on a nearby palm. What could be more thrilling than to force the captive to read through *Human Action*? And make that *ad infinitum*.

Remember though, if these selections, tuneful or not, good music or not, were to be broadcast with interspersed commentary on the importance of offending the easily offended, especially among those whose custom it is to retain limousines and private aircraft as modes of conveyance, then the program producer might need to revise his or her family's insurance coverage and take legal advice.

«[Previous Article](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Next Article](#)»

Robert Gear is a Contributing Editor to *New English Review* who now lives in the American Southwest. He is a retired English teacher and has co-authored with his wife several texts in the field of ESL.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](https://twitter.com/NERIconoclast)