

THE NON-WEDDING
AND UNHOLY DEADLOCK

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Setting: Wapping Abbey Green

Time: Wednesday, 23rd July, 1986

Commentator (with bated breath and reverential air)

Friends and good people of Wapping, we are gathered here today, on this dubious occasion, within spitting distance of the barbed wire at Fortress Wapping.

Commentator (imploring)

But please do not spit at it because it might be electrified - to bear witness to a ceremony of Mediation and Reconciliation between, in the red corner, Dame Brenda of Sogart and Fleet Street, and in the blue corner, the Brigand Master of Fortress Wapping, Rupert Murdoch. The ceremony of Mediation, Arbitration, and Conciliation will be conducted by Red Ken, the recently departed and lamented Arch Druid of County Hall.

This, the main supporting event of the day, is being carried by satellite to the four corners of the world and beyond, and also for those lucky enough to have a TV in the bog.

The styles and dress here today vary a little, from the conventional, and bear no resemblance to the clothes style and fashions being worn at another event across the Metropolis

today (with bated breath) Yes, folks, I think I see one of the protagonists making his way from his dressing room to the arena. Yes, folks, I was right: it's the old Brigand of Fortress Wapping making his way through the crowds towards the arena. As he gets closer I can see he looks angry, but confident.

He is wearing a T-shirt with the stars and stripes emblazoned on the front, and a Union Jack, with the slogan 'I love Blessed Maggie' and her Anti-Trade Union Laws emblazoned on the back. He scowls beautifully, from ear to ear, as he kicks the penitent-stool out of the way to the Arbitration Altar. That does not bode well for a happy outcome folks. He is accompanied by his Chaplain, the pious, sanctimonious, pontificating, Rev. Andrew Neil, who in between bouts of admiring the girls on page three, sheds buckets of crocodile tears for the six thousand sacked print workers. Hold everything, folks, I think I see Dame Brenda heading towards the arena (with bated breath) Yes, I was right. It is Dame Brenda (gushing) Yes, it is Dame Brenda, and her dress takes one's breath away. It is an elegant and fetching off the shoulder Tribune, flared at the bottom. This is a turn up for the book, folks, but she does look regal, majestic and radiant. Now I can see the slogan on the back of her dress. Yes, folks, it reads 'Murdoch, you are a shit'. She is accompanied in the arena by the Father of the Chapel of the Sunday Times, who was unfrocked by the Brigand Mudoch.

Things will soon be getting underway now. Red Ken, the Arch Druid, is stepping into the arena. He is wearing a nineteen eight-five Rate Capped Mitre and Cape. Now he is calling the

two protagonists to the centre of the arena. He is giving them his instructions. Yes, I can hear what he is saying, good people of Wapping. He has warned against gouging, kicking and foul language. He gave the Brigand of Wapping a steely look when he warned against foul language.

Commentator (Excitedly) Yes, folks, I think we will see the sparks flying any moment now Red Ken has removed his rate capped Mitre. It looks from here as if they are going to get down to the nitty gritty straight away, with no formalities, or niceties. Yes, the former Arch Druid of County Hall is putting the question to Dame Brenda (hesitating) Forgive me, folks, I am trying to read his lips, and it's difficult when he has his back to me. Yes, I got it now. Will you, Dame Brenda, enter into an unconditional surrender pact with the Brigand of Fortress Wapping from this day forward, so help you, and Sogat and the T.U.C. A flush of anger comes to the cheerful Dame Brenda. You ask too much Arch Druid she exclaims. How can I betray my six thousand members, that this Brigand sacked, and then stripped them of any redundancy pay? Red Ken is asking the Brigand Murdoch for his reply to the charge. Brigand Murdoch speaks out in his defence.

Your members, madam, are a most ungrateful bunch. Did I not offer my old building full of clapped-out printing machines in full settlement of our dispute, and your members turned down my generous offer out of hand, with not as much as a thank you Mr. Murdoch. They could have occupied themselves in printing whatever they liked, while I occupied myself in my lawful business of amassing a massive bloody fortune.

(Commentator) The Arch Druid has issued a profane language warning to the Brigand. He is holding up a blue card in the Brigand's face. The Brigand pleads he is not an unreasonable man, so long as his workers do what they are bloody told and ask no questions.

(Commentator) The Brigand turns towards Dame Brenda, pleading. I ask but little of your members. Here are my terms in strict confidence, and not for publication in my salacious and gutter press.

1. Legally binding agreements on the Union and its members on my terms.
2. No industrial action in any circumstances. Instant dismissal without appeal for anyone breaking this rule.
3. Management having total and unfettered right to manager.
4. No closed.
5. Provided nobody questions my right to do whatever the hell I like in my own print works, I am a very reasonable man.

You can see that, Dame Brenda. On the other hand let me be frank. I will not suffer any interference from Trade Unions, TUCS, or anybody lese for that matter. I am a law unto myself, and the quicker your members get that message the better for me.

(Commentator) Now Red Ken has asked Dame Brneda to respond to the Brigand Murdoch.

On behalf of my members and all rank and file trade unionists everywhere, I must state never to your conditions, and remind you that Queen Victoria is dead, and none of our memebers are prepared to become Bob Cratchets. You are trying to turn the clock back to the days of Dickens.

The Brigand Murdoch speaks up again. It is true that Queen Victoria is dead, but Blessed Margaret is alive and well, and I will see her next week in ten Downign Street.

Dame Brenda turns to leave, with a parting farewell for the Brigand Murdoch.

I bid you a good day, and a soldiers farewell, coupled with a Harvey Smith. She raises two fingers in gesture.

They depart and go their separate ways, and the strike goes on, and on, and on,