

## THE BBC ARCHIVE POST-JIMMY SAVILE: IRREPARABLE DAMAGE OR RECOVERABLE GROUND?

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Clad in a gold-lamé tracksuit, jacket unzipped to reveal a blue T-shirt emblazoned with the broadcast dates of the BBC's long-running pop music show *Top of the Pops* (1964–2006), presenter Jimmy Savile returned, aged eighty, to co-host its final installment. So iconic was his relationship with the show that he was given the honor of symbolically turning off the studio lights for the final time. Behind the stage, walking past electrical rigging, the veteran broadcaster sighed and gently shook his head with sadness as he flipped the switch; the studio lights shut down in sequence and the scene went to black. Five years later, following Savile's death in 2011, this scene was revisited to symbolize another ending. Layered against the celestial yet celebratory tone of contemporary pop act Florence and the Machine's "Cosmic Love" (complete with sections of harp glissando) the sequence formed part of the concluding section of the tribute program *Sir Jimmy Savile: As It Happened* (2011). Part of a series of televised memorials and deftly employing 60 years' worth of BBC television archive content alongside testimonials from Savile's colleagues, peers and fans, the program worked to remind the viewer of the centrality of Savile to both the BBC and British popular culture. Broadcaster Chris Evans' voice-over reminded us that "for six decades, *Sir Jimmy Savile* was part of the fabric of British life" and concluded with the line, "Now, Sir Jimmy has gone, but undoubtedly his legend will live on." Less than a year later, this line is infused with dark irony: in 2012 Jimmy Savile is exposed as having been a voracious sexual predator and is at the heart of the biggest sexual abuse scandal in British history.

This chapter is concerned with what is now a cavity at the heart of the BBC archive: the space the broadcaster Jimmy Savile once occupied and the connection that the BBC once celebrated. It aims to demonstrate that, despite efforts by the BBC to eradicate Savile from its

televised (and online) archive, specifically in relation to *Top of the Pops*, full removal is impossible. Savile was too significant a presence within the light entertainment and popular music culture of the late twentieth-century BBC—and therefore of Britain—to ever be forgotten. His prominence in shared British cultural memory is evident in the importance the BBC placed upon Savile in the years leading to his death. Post-scandal, as the BBC has attempted this eradication, Savile's place within both criminal and broadcasting history is more assured than ever, most ironically due to the BBC's obligation to report one of the most extensive criminal investigations ever undertaken.

Opening with a discussion of the BBC's relationship with Jimmy Savile and the broadcaster's response to both Savile's death and the emerging scandal (which is situated within a history of crisis at the BBC) this essay continues by paying specific attention to Savile's legacy in relation to the *Top of the Pops* brand and archive. Despite turning off the lights on the live show in 2006, both Savile and *Top of the Pops* have found a perennial home on both BBC2 and BBC4 through cycles of both nostalgic and historical programming. We examine the shift in the framing of this programming as the scandal irrupts and Savile is excised from the show's history. Finally, we reflect on the re-encounter with images from the Savile archive post-scandal and how the changing meanings and interpretations impact on the British public's and the BBC's senses of culpability.

### **The Life, Death, and Afterlife of Jimmy Savile**

Jimmy Savile died in October, 2011, at the age of 84. His career had been both stellar and unique, with innumerable hours of airtime over both television and radio.<sup>1</sup> Described as “the country's first pop disc jockey” (“Obituary: Sir Jimmy Savile,” 2011), Savile's flagship pop music program *Top of the Pops* premiered on New Year's Day, 1964. He remained a regular presenter well into the 1980s and returned in 2006 for the final live show. He was also widely

known for his charity work, raising an estimated £40 million for various causes over the decades (“Sir Jimmy Savile,” 2011). Television and charity were intertwined; in 1971 he fronted the road safety campaign, *Clunk Click Every Trip*, while from 1973–75 he hosted the BBC1 entertainment show, *Clunk Click*. His image was carefully cultivated: the platinum silver hair, the cigar smoking, the gold chains, perennially costumed in a (often customized) tracksuit both on screen and while running his prolific money-raising marathons. He was closely associated with Stoke Mandeville and Broadmoor hospitals, while also working as a porter in Leeds General Infirmary. His catchphrases “Now then, now then” and “As it happens” cemented him amongst those few known purely by the swiftest of references. Savile’s eccentric benevolence bled back into TV: from 1975–94 he presented *Jim’ll Fix It*, a BBC1 Saturday night primetime entertainment show in which Savile “fixed” requests sent in by children for such televisual deeds as visiting a forest with trees festooned with sweets or seeing the reverse face of Big Ben. Savile’s longevity within BBC and *Top of the Pops* heritage ensured he was caught within cycles of nostalgia, recreating the first edition of the pop program for its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and fronting its final instalment, while *Fix It* itself returned for a 2007 special in *Jim’ll Fix It Strikes Again*. Amongst numerous honors, he received an OBE in 1971 and both a knighthood and Papal knighthood in 1990. Establishment celebrity was further weaved into Savile’s fame via publicized friendships with Margaret Thatcher, Prince Charles, and Princess Diana (“Jimmy Savile’s Public Persona,” 2011). Savile’s achievements and recognitions were legion; he was a national figure and he was at the center of the BBC.

In the wake of Savile’s death, the then BBC Director General Mark Thompson commented, “From *Top of the Pops* to *Jim’ll Fix It*, Jimmy’s unique style entertained generations of BBC audiences. Like millions of viewers and listeners we shall miss him greatly” (“Jimmy Savile: Tributes Flood In,” 2011). Multiple tributes were aired: *Sir Jimmy*

*Savile: As it Happened*; the Christmas specials *Sir Jimmy Savile: In His Own Words* (2011); and the Boxing Day reimagining of *Jim'll Fix It* (2011), in which *EastEnders* actor Shane Richie stood in for the late Savile. Lines of popular entertainment converged within this show—of soap opera in the body of Ritchie, of BBC archive and history in the reiteration of *Jim'll Fix It*—while the heady mix of nostalgia and cultural memory, always so acute amongst the many rituals of Christmas, was eagerly prompted in the programming. Two days later, BBC2 broadcast an hour-long archive special, *Sir Jimmy Savile at the BBC* (2011). This laid additional claim that the BBC would remain as the repository for the televisual memories of this much-loved, recently passed figure.

The revelations that emerged in the aftermath of Savile's death caused one of the biggest crises in the corporation's history. Immediately after he died, *Newsnight*, BBC television's weekday news and current affairs program, commenced an investigation into allegations that Savile was a pedophile. In December, the resulting report was pulled shortly before the Christmas specials were aired. Eight months later, in October 2012, and after months of speculation over Savile's proclivities in the printed press, ITV (the BBC's commercial competitor) broadcast the allegations in an edition of their own current affairs strand, *Exposure*. The BBC stood accused of protecting its own, a fact made ironically most explicit when Peter Rippon, the editor of *Newsnight*, went on the offensive and wrote in his BBC blog, "It has been suggested I was ordered to [...] [pull the Savile investigation] by my bosses as part of a BBC cover-up" (Rippon, 2012).

The ensuing panic on *Newsnight* allowed a second piece around pedophilia to be broadcast without the proper verifications. The piece implicated an establishment figure in institutional child abuse, and while he was not named in the report, he was subsequently named on the internet as former Tory minister Lord McAlpine. The BBC paid damages for libel, various members of *Newsnight* and the BBC News management team were fired, and

the Director General George Entwistle resigned after just 54 days in office (Marsh, 2012). The Pollard Review, a BBC investigation into the events surrounding the dropping of the *Newsnight* report on Savile,<sup>ii</sup> concluded, “In my view, the most worrying aspect of the Jimmy Savile story for the BBC was not the decision to drop the story itself. It was the complete inability to deal with the events that followed” (Pollard, 2012, p. 22). In their article on the Savile scandal, Chris Greer and Eugene McLaughlin, note both the “symbiotic relationship between Savile and the BBC” (2013, p. 250), and the BBC’s own role in the obscuration of events as being central to the confusion that followed the initial revelations. More than three years on, Savile continues to be investigated by both the Metropolitan Police and through the Smith Review.<sup>iii</sup> However, his guilt is fully recognized; in January 2013, Peter Watt of the NSPCC referred to Savile as “without doubt one of the most prolific sex offenders we have ever come across” (“Jimmy Savile Scandal: Report Reveals Decades of Abuse,” 2013).

### **A History of Crisis**

Crisis has long been part of the BBC’s being and it has been shaped by its responses to the continual waves of criticism. Historically, crises have been catalyzed by political figures such as Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher, or from public bodies such as the National Viewers and Listeners Association. This was headed by the formidable Mary Whitehouse, who battled from the 1960s against what she saw as the BBC’s responsibility for Britain’s moral decline. The 1980s saw sustained governmental attacks on the BBC. In 1984, the corporation was sued for slander over the Panorama episode *Maggie’s Militant Tendency*; the case went on for two years until the BBC withdrew and awarded the MP Neil Hamilton £20,000 in damages. In 1986, Special Branch raided BBC Scotland, concerned that a program about a secret satellite system would constitute a security breach, and this was not shown until two years later. From 1988–94, there was a broadcast ban of all voices of Irish

Republican or Loyalist paramilitaries in an attempt to censor the reporting of the Troubles. All of these elements are broadsides on the purpose of the BBC. While Mary Whitehouse may have been making moral claims for what was “right” to broadcast and demonstrating a worry about the power television has on the community, governmental intrusions are attacks on the key BBC tenet of journalistic impartiality and how the news should operate in differing political contexts. If this principle is placed under doubt, it undermines trust in the BBC as a body worthy of delivering news: the information which contextualizes and defines our place in the world. Without trust underpinning its purpose, the BBC can make no claim to function as the public’s (all notions of the Broadcasting Corporation are proprietary) primary broadcaster.

The 2003 Hutton Inquiry delivered a stinging blow to this crucial notion of trust, recent enough to still be fresh in the minds of senior corporation figures. Convened after the death of David Kelly, who had been revealed as a source of a report by journalist Andrew Gilligan, the inquiry resulted in both Gilligan’s resignation and that of Director General Greg Dyke. It was not concluded there, however; the Kelly affair also revealed a process of obscuration and counter-obscuration by the BBC and the government—an inconclusive “he said, she said” that was still being played out in the press some six years later by Gilligan and *The Observer*’s Nick Cohen (Cohen, 2010; Gilligan and Hoon, 2010). In this age of supposed transparency and accountability, processes of media and government can still be wilfully unrevealed. Hutton found the BBC culpable of enabling Gilligan to present the most serious of allegations against the government while “the editorial system which the BBC permitted was defective” (Hutton, 2004); this cut so deeply into the heart of the BBC’s news culture that it cost the Director General his job. So while previous governmental attacks may have been repeated attempts to undermine the editorial principles of the BBC, Hutton confirmed them as defective. Therefore, while crisis can be seen as part of the BBC’s being, always the

crises were a battle with external forces: battles over what the BBC should and could do. This changed with Hutton, a crisis characterized by disorganization and misinformation from within. Savile reveals something far more insidious: the fact of a BBC broadcasting legend being unutterably different from his actual person, and the possibility that the BBC enabled this. The Savile scandal eroded trust in the BBC, not just in the delivery of news but as evidence of a systemic failure in its “duty of care” as a public service institution.

Given his prominence and longevity within the corporation, Savile therefore presents a psychic horror of an unprecedented scale. He destabilized the BBC from within, while public trust plummeted in the wake of the revelations. A survey in November, 2012 showed that trust in BBC journalists had dropped by thirty-seven percent since Hutton (Kellner, 2012), while a month later, another reported that forty-nine percent of people trusted the BBC less than before the Savile revelations (“Staring into the Abyss,” 2012, p. 2). By June, 2013, a third survey found that only thirty percent of people considered the BBC “reliable” (Fildes, 2013). With the delay of the Smith report and the BBC entering another period of charter renewal negotiations, the Savile scandal continues to reverberate through the institution simply through its lack of conclusion. Whilst we do not wish to speculate on these unknown futures, we want to question, given the BBC’s history of crisis, both what makes the Savile scandal so peculiarly damaging for the BBC and how the institution continues to evolve and adapt. These questions are considered through an analysis of the BBC’s attempts to re-contextualize and de-contaminate the *Top of the Pops* archive.

### **A Crisis of History**

Jimmy Savile presents a point where the history and memory *of* the BBC, popular history *on* the BBC and crisis *within* the BBC converge. As has been discussed, Savile’s presence in British popular culture across the decades until his death in 2011 was as prominent as

anyone's. The need to fill hours in the wake of digital multiplication meant that Savile's shelf-life as a television personality even outran his broadcasting career, with his presenting regularly being repeated in *Top of the Pops* reruns and in compilations of the show on *Top of the Pops 2* (BBC2, 1994–present). Further programming around the show includes one-off documentaries such as *Top of the Pops: The True Story* (2001 and re-versioned in 2006), first shown as part of a themed evening on BBC2, *I Love Top of the Pops*, hosted across its 145-minute transmission by Jimmy Savile himself; *Top of the Pops: The Story of 1976–1980* (2011–14) and 2015's *Big Hits: TOTP 1964 to 1975*, itself an iteration of a special of the same name shown in 2011. These repeats and re-versions are firstly examples of the BBC's dependence on its archive as a source of cheap programming. They also present *Top of the Pops* as demonstrative of the variances and possibilities of history, memory, and nostalgia on television—of television production culture, of pop music on television, of fashion, of the DJs who presented it—and re-present the renewal of the BBC's cultural identity and its construction of a specific cultural memory. Astrid Erll states that cultural memory “requires the continuation of meaning through established, stable forms of expression” (Erll, 2011, p. 29). Anyone who danced to *Top of the Pops* as a child, and in the '70s there were 19 million viewers (“Top of the Pops Through the Decades,” 2004), will both recall the comfort of this expression while retaining and inhabiting these cultural memories to which Savile, whilst acknowledging an unease with his persona, was central. Hazel Collie and Mary Irwin identify this unease among their research subjects, stating that *Top of the Pops*' “middle-aged male presenters were perceived as ‘cheesy’ and even sexually predatory” (Collie and Irwin, 2013). But still, the show continued in its original form from 1964 to 2006 and bled across into the newer channels, creating new memories for new audiences and layering older memories for those already existing, persistently engaging new audiences in repeated cycles of iterative programming, always with Savile at its center.

The longevity of *Top of the Pops* and its centrality to nostalgic re-contextualizations of British popular (music) culture operated as a specific example of both the reassurance and the intimacy of television. It was part of the everyday rituals and routines of its viewers and was danced to in a million teenage bedrooms. Savile's posthumous transformation from eccentric national treasure to notorious pedophile has the potential to utterly rupture these memories. Patterns of scandal behave in a similarly iterative way, looming repeatedly with each new revelation, inquiry, and report, as well as in this case with allegations about other celebrities such as Stuart Hall, Rolf Harris, Gary Glitter or Dave Lee Travis (although all were convicted of smaller-scale crimes than Savile's) and in the US context, Bill Cosby. Savile, therefore, represents a rupture of the safe iterative pattern to be replaced by something quite ghoulish: a recurring nightmare. But the archive body that is *Top of the Pops* is too important to cease on the BBC altogether. From even within the throes of the original crisis in 2012–13, Richard Klein, then controller of BBC4, stated that repeats of the show would continue on a "case-by-case" basis ("Top of the Pops Reruns Continue," 2013). While this could be seen as indicative of simple indecision on the part of the BBC, it also suggests an archive body too important to dismiss. Repeats continue to be shown, from which Savile has—mostly—been excised: when a clip of him presenting was shown in September of 2014, the BBC duly apologized for its mistake ("BBC Apologises for Airing Jimmy Savile Appearance," 2014). This accidental appearance came some 18 months after a character appeared dressed as Savile and uttered his catchphrase "Now then, guys and gals" within a repeated episode of the pre-school children's show *The Tweenies*, for which the BBC received 216 complaints ("BBC Receives 216 Complaints for Tweenies Jimmy Savile Spoof," 2013). Of course, Savile still appears in news reports as the investigation into his and others' alleged and convicted crimes continues.

## **The New (Old) Top of the Pops**

The re-contextualization of the television archive allows program-makers to position content “within new frames and contexts that hold the past at a distance and reframe it in relation to the present” (Holdsworth, 2011, p. 98). The *Top of the Pops* archive is now being repositioned to both bound the appearances of Savile and alter the viewer response to the show, essentially repackaged to retain elements of nostalgia while negating the presence of Savile. Firstly, and most obviously, is the post-scandal removal of Savile from the documentaries around *Top of the Pops*. A comparison of the program *Top of the Pops: The True Story* (2001 and 2006) and the series *TOTP: The Story of 1976, 77, 78, 79, 80* (2011–present) demonstrates the way in which Savile has been extracted from the newer televisual histories of the show and the impossible conundrum faced by the BBC in its archival treatment of Savile. As mentioned, *Top of the Pops: The True Story* first aired on December 8, 2001, as part of a BBC2 evening hosted by Savile and devoted to the show. It was re-versioned after *Top of the Pops* was axed in 2006 and shown in that version on July 30 of that year as part of the BBC2 evening *Top of the Pops: The Final Countdown*; it was broadcast again on BBC4 on January 7, 2008, and April 1, 2011. Using a combination of presenter links, archive, and talking heads, themselves a mix of starry—Kylie Minogue and Keith Richards among them—and authoritative, Savile is present throughout. He is there in the archive, presenting in excerpts from the 1960s and ’70s, while also serving as a talking head, commenting on the significance of the show as a boost to acts’ record sales and on the changing style and production culture over the years. His tone is not always complimentary; at one point, he sneeringly says that “it became like an American political convention.” This underlines his prominence as an associated figure: he can say whatever he likes. The final shot of the documentary is culled from the final episode of *Top of the Pops* itself: Jimmy Savile turning off the studio lights.

*Top of the Pops: The Story of 1976* (2011) contains archive of Savile in the introduction and then features him prominently in the back story commentary: the recollection of the early years of the series. This is partly explicable because of the introductory nature of this episode within the strand, but the prominence of Savile throughout the show demonstrates his continuing centrality. *Top of the Pops: The Story of 1977* (2012) is differently problematic in the emerging landscape of the scandal. The inherently lewd nature of the show is foregrounded with frequent shots of wiggling female bottoms, and is explicitly addressed in the segment on the ageing DJs surrounded by, enjoying, and ogling the much younger female company. The DJs, including Savile, are presented as an outdated precursor to the coming of punk, but essentially harmless given the cultural norms of the time. This episode also contains footage of Gary Glitter. Glitter had been convicted in 1999 of possession of indecent images, serving two months and jailed in Vietnam in 2006 for child abuse. How was it acceptable for him to appear? One can conclude that Glitter's crimes were separate enough from the BBC as to be deemed undamaging to the corporation should he be shown in archive. The two episodes for 1978 and 1979, produced post-scandal in 2013 and 2014 respectively, are a notable shift away from the previous analyses. Despite voiceover lines such as "the DJs were the real stars" (from 1978), the first episode emphasizes production, performers, and audience, while the latter moves into contextualizing the show within music history in its discussion of the punk/disco dichotomy and *Top of the Pops* as a showcase for reggae and 2 Tone. Both episodes make heavy use of the late-'70s context of significant social unrest and how the show functioned as escapism in troubled times. Neither episode mentions Savile. It may be arguable that the later episodes in this series, continuing into *The Story of 1980* (2015), reflect the changing emphasis of the show itself. However, this is contradicted by the fact that all the documentaries produced pre-scandal celebrating both *Top of the Pops* and Savile place him as central to the show throughout its lifespan. For

example, *Sir Jimmy Savile at the BBC* uses *Top of the Pops* performances throughout the decades—the Rolling Stones for the '60s, Sweet for the '70s and The Human League for the '80s—as a spine to demonstrate Savile's longevity.

What, however, is the BBC to do? It is clear that the *Top of the Pops* archive remains too important a source to be abandoned, so the BBC must eliminate Savile from its iterations of the show and in doing so stand accused of attempting suddenly and retroactively to reposition one of the most important cultural products it has produced. Is it the suddenness of this repositioning that retains a quality of distastefulness, as if a period of mourning has gone ignored? Should the BBC have suspended all programming associated with Savile during the period of investigation, or would this have left it open to seeming culpability? Certainly, including Savile in post-scandal programming could only have allowed and even prompted further scrutiny through what Frank Furedi calls “the project of re-examining the past for clues” (Furedi, 2013 p. 16). This might entail a search for evidence of Savile's crimes, in particular by the printed press, within the BBC archive: grainy images from Savile's teleography re-printed in close-up and images and details pored over, annotated, ringed, and highlighted as journalists and investigators “seek out” and sensationalize alleged incriminating behavior.

### **Re-encountering the Savile Archive**

The shift, within less than a year, from a context of memorialization and celebration to one of controversy and scandal has left the BBC with an archive suffused with alternate meanings and interpretations. The programs produced in the immediate context of Savile's death and then in the irruption of the posthumous scandal reveal much about the ways in which archival images and sounds are managed and shaped through their re-contextualization. The re-framing of images used in the 2011 tribute programs *Sir Jimmy Savile: As It Happened* and

*Sir Jimmy Savile at the BBC* to their use in 2012's *Panorama* special, "Jimmy Savile – What the BBC Knew" (2012) produce an unpleasant affective change in response—from familiar nostalgic feeling to the suspicion of culpability just by the act of viewing. For example, the caravan, which toured with Savile during his BBC roadshows and charity marathons, is featured prominently in *Sir Jimmy Savile at the BBC* as a focus for the crowds of girls drawn towards the celebrity (with Savile hemmed in as they clamor for autographs). In the *Panorama* episode the same footage is used to accompany the description of the caravan as a place in which Savile would assault underage girls. There is repeated use of a clip where Savile strides, in long shot, in a red tracksuit across a courtyard at Broadmoor Hospital; the shift in focus moves him from eccentrically attired kindness to something inhumanly predatory. *Sir Jimmy Savile at the BBC* even makes central Savile's pursuance of women, with now-revealing clips of him on Parkinson, in an interview with Uri Geller and a clip of Savile with a bedbound woman in a hospital, within which Savile's "playful" attitude towards sex is emphasized. The final shot of this archive hour seems horribly prescient as he stands with a pubescent girl and says straight to camera, "As it happens, see you later," as she glances over to him.

Here, we recognize two particular modes of re-contextualization: the first produced by the program-maker through the new framing of familiar images and the second "felt" or "read" by the viewer in their re-encounter with images within a dramatically new context.<sup>iv</sup> Images of a contemplative Savile are re-read as ominous, his famed eccentricity or oddness re-interpreted as criminal deviance; images and words are flooded by a dramatic irony. Martin Jay defines dramatic irony as occurring when "hindsight provides some purchase on a truth denied actors at the time history is made" (2013, p. 32). This irony is read as particularly cruel by the continual assertion that Savile was "hiding in plain sight." This appears "confirmed" by the re-encounter with the archive. From Mohammed Ali's amusing and

bemused dismissal of Savile's eccentricity (signaling to camera through silent comic asides that Savile is not mentally well) during his appearance on *Jim 'll Fix It* in 1976 to documentary maker Louis Theroux's direct confrontation of Savile (and the veteran's rebuff) with the perennial tabloid accusation that, given his "odd" persona and his high-profile work with children on TV and for charity, he might be a pedophile ("When Louis Met... Jimmy," 2000). The portentous quality of the image (as famously discussed in relation to photography by both Walter Benjamin (1931) and Roland Barthes (1980)) offers a fantasy in which we can read our knowledge of the future into the archival image. From the vantage point of the present, it is the now apparent "obviousness" of Savile's crimes, articulated through this imaginative encounter with the archive, that further condemns the BBC and other institutions (e.g. the NHS) wrapped up in the scandal.

Jimmy Savile has lingered, unresolved, as a toxic asset within the corporation and the television archive since the scandal broke in 2012. How can such damage to the archive be remedied? If a library is burnt to the ground, with papers and irreplaceable books turned to ashes, it can be mourned, while work can be done to repair what has been lost. But a cavity such as the one Savile has left is irreparable. His crimes are contaminatory to those brands associated with the celebrity and to the BBC. His image and archival presence is akin to a tumor that must apparently, given the BBC's actions, be excised. But bounding Savile is impossible. Whilst Savile presents, in Greer and McLaughlin's terms, a "scandal without end," enabled and maintained by myriad media platforms and digital archives (2012, p. 247), his role as a presenter ties him to certain facets of the programs he fronted and the values of the institution. Ann Gray and Erin Bell demonstrate how presenters of history documentaries are the personification of the BBC as a "knowledge brand," where persona and authority converge for a particular style and tone of delivery (2013, p. 74), while Jean Seaton characterizes Sir David Attenborough as a "proportionate human measure" against which

audiences could judge the majesty of the natural world (2015, p. 107). Savile was the “other,” the anti-Reithian eccentric everyman who looked and sounded like nothing else and was used to introduce ideas of youth and difference to a BBC which needed, in the early-’60s, to respond to both the challenge of the television duopoly and to reach a recently cohered youth audience. The journalist and critic Dave Haslam, talking in *Top of the Pops: The Story of 1976*, defines Savile as a “DJ pioneer” and “genuine music lover.” Savile represented new possibilities for television in both his bringing of pop music and the sense of a new order; the unique personality, look, sound, and attitude; the working class ex-miner-turned-DJ plucked from Radio Caroline; and at the vanguard of the new aristocracy, celebrity.

In the tribute program *Sir Jimmy Savile: As It Happened*, this collapse of the old order is made explicit in the segment detailing Savile’s relationships with the highest of establishment figures that include Margaret Thatcher and Prince Charles. His creation by the BBC is explicitly articulated. Using the voiceover of Chris Evans, an arguable successor to the anarchic presentation style of Savile, the script states, “*Top of the Pops* had provided Jim with a platform and now the whole world was his stage,” and takes credit for making Savile a star, while singer Lulu, as a talking head, elaborates on Savile’s subsequent level of celebrity, saying, “He was pretty famous, yeah he was huge,” while still images of Savile with iconic bands such as the Beatles and The Rolling Stones are flashed up on the screen. It is precisely his celebrity that is commonly seen as enabling both Savile’s crimes and the reason his victims felt unable to speak out.

Whilst Savile’s complete exorcism from both the archive and cultural memory remains an impossibility, we want to conclude with a series of questions and possible ramifications that arise in response to his attempted removal. Firstly, at what point do the attempts at such excision continue to deny the victims’ rights to have their suffering acknowledged? The BBC did not acknowledge the victims as its first response; it attempted

to deny all responsibility, nullifying subsequent admissions of sympathy. In the context of the victims' needs, the BBC's association with Savile continues to be minimized. If Savile's modus operandi, as it has been repeatedly described, was to "hide in plain sight," does the British public simply shut down the part of its collective (popular cultural) consciousness that serves as a witness? Whilst the legacy and history of *Top of the Pops* is re-shaped and made safe for consumption, there are the more difficult, problematic, and unpredictable histories and memories that are contained and silenced. What, for example, might the television archive reveal about the cultures and attitudes towards young women and children that enabled such widespread sexual abuse to occur? How do they continue or connect with the present? The Savile scandal places the BBC within a particular tension, caught by the need to preserve the trust of its audience but to also uphold the values of transparency. The extent to which the BBC can turn the studio lights back on and illuminate its role in these difficult histories and memories remains to be seen.

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<sup>i</sup> On radio, Savile presented *Savile's Travels* (Radio 1, 1968–77), *Speakeasy* (Radio 1, 1975–77) and *Jimmy Savile's Old Record Club* (Radio 1, 1978–87), as well as regular appearances across other shows. Source: BBC Genome Project, <http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk>.

<sup>ii</sup> Nick Pollard was engaged by the BBC to investigate events around the dropping of the *Newsnight* report into Savile. His findings were published on December 18, 2012.

<sup>iii</sup> An inquiry led by Dame Janet Smith was established by the BBC in October, 2012, to conduct an “impartial, thorough and independent review of the culture and practices of the BBC during the years that Jimmy Savile worked there” (Dame Janet Smith Review, 2015). At the time of writing, the findings of the Smith Review are yet to be released at the request of the Metropolitan Police who are concerned that the report could prejudice ongoing investigations (“BBC Jimmy Savile Abuse Report,” 2015).

<sup>iv</sup> Linda Hutcheon's writing on nostalgia and irony is particularly revealing here as she emphasizes the similarity between the two as modes of engagement with or felt responses to the moment of encounter between past and present. She writes: “I want to argue that to call something ironic or nostalgic is, in fact, less a *description* of the ENTITY ITSELF than an *attribution* of a quality of RESPONSE. Irony is not something in an object that you either ‘get’ or fail to ‘get’: irony ‘happens’ for you (or, better, you *make* it ‘happen’) when two meanings, one said and the other unsaid, come together, usually with a certain critical edge. Likewise, nostalgia is not something you ‘perceive’ *in* an object; it is what you ‘feel’ when two different temporal moments, past and present, come together for you and, often, carry considerable emotional weight. In both cases, it is the element of response – of active participation, both intellectual and affective – that makes for the power” (1998, paragraph 15).