

One & Other Project

Hello my name is Kate Rowles and I'm interviewing you for the Wellcome Trust as you are taking part in Antony Gormley's art work One & Other, the day today is the 5th of September 2009 and the time is 11.15 p.m., if I can please ask you to say your full name, your age and where you come from?

My name is Louise Barrett, I'm 38 years old and I'm from Beverly in East Yorkshire.

How are you today?

Nervous, but excited as well.

Good, good, what do you think you are nervous about?

I'm not really sure, really, probably of drunk hecklers or something like that because of the time of night and I'm not going to stand on there and do a public performance but I'm hoping they are not going to be bored I suppose for my hour, but yes, I think that's what I'm most worried about, of drunks.

And are you excited?

Oh definitely, definitely excited.

And what was it that motivated you to put yourself forward to be part of One & Other?

I'm going to run the London Marathon next year for the Foundation of Studies into infant death and so I was looking for other ways of raising money and this came about and thought it was an ideal opportunity to show it on a national level rather than just locally where I live because all the fundraising we've done previously has always been in our local area. So hopefully this will open it out to lots of other people and also if anyone who has been affected by cot death is watching, then if I tell them my story and how I've been affected by it, then you know if one person takes something from it which is positive then it would have been a worthwhile thing to do.

What is your story, how have you been affected by this?

Six years ago my son died after four days and he was born on the Wednesday and he died on the Saturday. And so the Foundation of Studies of infant death, they were there as a support for us as a family, not just for me and my husband, but for my mum and dad and other people who were affected. So this for me is a way [sirens in the background] to give back to them for the support they gave us, if I can raise money to help them do research into cot death so that other people end up not being affected by it then that's what I hope to achieve from all the fundraising that we've done over the last six years.

And how are you after this?

[More sirens in the background] Well, I'm, I'm very sort of British really, stiff upper lip, get on with it type of thing and I know lots of people are they might just fall to pieces I'm not really like that. I have to take the positive ... something dreadful happened to us so I have to look at the positive that I can do from it so we had another baby the following year who is a very healthy lively five year old and had the first baby lived we may have not had the second one. So it's a bit of a double edged sword really to, you

One & Other Project

know, obviously I don't think it's a good thing that happened but then I might never have had Alex, you know, the second one. So you move on and you learn to live with it, you never get over it but you do learn to live with it, but it does change you, you become more take things for the moment you know if you decide we want to do something we will just go and do it because you know we might not be here tomorrow it does make you realise that life is really quite precious and can be very short so, yes.

And so you are going to run the London Marathon?

I know that's crackers isn't it? I've never done anything like that in my life, but yes the FSID [Foundation of Sudden Infant Death] contacted me and said, "Oh we've got these places for London Marathon, are you interested?" So I said yes and all right then off you go. I started training for it and actually as you can see I'm not runner material so it's probably going to be a hard slog but hopefully I'll be a racing whippet by next April and I shall run around and bite everybody, probably not ...

And how are you feeling about standing on the plinth now?

I'm really looking forward to it, I'm quite, I think I'm going to use it as a bit of a therapy session, stand up there, well I've got a chair actually, sit up there and chat to the people on the internet and take the laptop up so if people want to twitter me they can do that or twitter me. So that should be quite interesting the interacting with the internet audience as well as the people who were in the square, I've been quite excited about that because I've been quite active within the twitter community for One & Other so people know who I am and the fact that I'm going up so I think that would be quite interesting but also standing up there and telling my story and seeing what sort of response happens afterwards I think I'm quite excited about that and you know if anyone can get something from it afterwards then all good.

So can I ask you on a basic level how are you going to spend your hour on the plinth, you've sort of explained it in bits and pieces but can I ask you to sort of put it together?

Well I'm going to stand up there and waffle on really that's what I do. I don't have a talent for singing or playing the guitar so but I am good at public speaking and standing up in front of a crowd and talking so I'm going to go there and I hope to talk for an hour and tell people about me and if they are not interested they can switch off or you know not watch. If they are interested to listen in, or talk about myself, a bit of gratuitous self-promotion and hopefully get a serious message across at the same time.

Yes.

I'm not going to throw stuff off there and I'm not going to take my clothes off. I'm going to go up there do my thing and come home.

You said you are kind of using it as a sort of therapy session, what do you mean by that?

Well after Ellis died we didn't have any counselling at the time as such and I've done

One & Other Project

radio shows and TV things since but you only get a very minimal slot of time to talk about what happened and I think this would be quite a good way of telling my side of the story from beginning to end, right down to, not actual conception but from the beginning of my pregnancy through to what happened, the death and the funeral and what we've done since. I just like to ... I suppose not so much, maybe therapy is the wrong word maybe it's just like a diary of what happened, a verbal diary of really the last six years and what's brought me to this point of wanting to stand up there to raise awareness into cot death and to raise money for research.

And what do your friends and family think about you taking part?

They are not surprised but they think it's a crack pot idea, my husband and my mum and dad are here, there will be people watching on the internet, they are not surprised that this is a thing I've got involved with. I've done things like abseiling the Amber bridge, I've done a parachute jump and all these other crazy things, I think this by far is the strangest thing I would have done strange in the nicest sense of the word really because it's unusual really. No one has ever done it before but I don't think anyone was particularly surprised that I took part in it.

Can I ask you to say a little bit about who you are as one of the 2400 members of the public that will be standing on the Fourth Plinth, if I can put that into personal context for you, what would you like to say about yourself if I was to ask you to describe who you are?

I'm a married mother of two that has an everyday job, I work in marketing and PR for a telecoms company I do my bit I do the school running in the morning and we go camping at week ends we've got a dog so we've got quite a very normal life I suppose. But we do odd stuff as well because for instance next week I'll be going to [inaudible] to see [inaudible] racing it's not the sort of thing you do every day. So we like to do that type of thing but I suppose Monday to Friday I suppose it's really not boring but normal I suppose. And so doing stuff like this makes life out of the ordinary and that's why I like doing stuff like this really is to just do something a little bit different because I don't think, I certainly wouldn't suggest I was a boring person. I think I'm a very outgoing person and you know I like a laugh as much as the next person but yes normal but a bit quirky.

And do you come from South Yorkshire, is that where you come originally?

No, we live in East Yorkshire but no I was born in Bedford. Originally my dad was in the army so we've lived all over the place, we lived in Germany, me and my sister went to boarding school in London and then the last place he was posted to was Macclesfield in East Yorkshire and out of all the places we've lived we liked it there the best so we stayed. So I've lived there about twenty five years now and ended up settling there myself. I have travelled since we lived there - I lived in America for a bit, I lived in the middle East for a bit and met my husband, who is a local lad, and married and settled there but I suppose I did all my travelling as a child. So for me it was really nice to settle somewhere and not have to move every two years. I went to seven different schools so to stay somewhere for more than two years was a bit of a novelty for me but yes it's quite nice not having to move all the time.

Do you think that had an impact on you, sort of living in lots of different places as a

One & Other Project

child?

Definitely yes, they all say that army kids go one of two ways: you either become a very outgoing person and always the life and soul or you become, you know, a quiet person that doesn't particularly mix very well and that's me and my sister. We are two opposite ends she was always the one who never had an awful lot of friends but she had very close friends whereas me I had like 12000 friends because it's just the sort of person I was. I think as we got older we've got more similar, I've quietened down and she's come out more of her comfort zone which has been quite interesting considering we are so different when we were teenagers. I think it does make you what you are being an army kid because you have to move every two years, you get on with things because you don't have any choice you have to make new friends and build up a new life and then move again.

Why do you think you'd like to do all these different things that sort of abseiling all the sort of quirky things as you put it?

Well I think I like to do things outside my comfort zones I'm not particularly keen on heights so doing something like this would always and even when abseiling off a bridge was very frightening but I think I like to do my bit I might do these things but I don't do them just for no reason I do them for charity or for something like that so I'm not the only person that benefits from it other people do I like to be involved that's what it is. I'm a bit nosy so if something else is going on then I'd like to be involved with all that and because this was going on I thought God this is a bit different and to be one of the first people to ever do it you know. I kind of hope that this never happens again and that the 2400 people that take part will be the only people that would have ever done this in the entire world and the entire history because I think that would be fantastic to be part of that. I mean if it happens again we would always be the first I suppose but you know I think because it's very different that's the sort of thing I'd like to do really.

And how did you like going to boarding school, what was that like?

I didn't like it much; it got better but yes not really my cup of tea, it was all right it makes you independent I think but other than that no, I met some nice people but yes, I didn't like it much.

And what was sort of, what was your route into your working life, with your career, how did you come to be where you are today?

I've always done jobs where I talk to people so when I've done part time jobs when I was at college I worked as a waitress and from there initially I started off as a secretary in a solicitor's but from there I went into sales orientated jobs. So I've done all of the horrible jobs that people don't like - I've done estate agency jobs, I've sold cars, I've sold insurance and I was quite good at sales. But it's not that you have to work harder as such but you work quite long hours and so I wanted a bit more of a life so I went and got a job in a marketing department and that's when I found out that at marketing I was actually better than sales. So that led me into my current job which I've been in for eight or nine years now. I do marketing and PR for a telecoms company called *Soulwise* so you know I come to London quite often to see journalists and PR staff and stuff like that, dealing with people on the phone, making

One & Other Project

videos and, you know, product videos and technical demonstrations and stuff. So yes, it's been quite good but still you still get the sales aspect of it I suppose with the whole meeting of people and talking to people and all that but you don't have the pressure of having to sell something, which I think is probably the hardest part of sales.

And do you enjoy your work?

Yes, love it, yes, I get up in the morning and I want to go to work and the day that stops I'll have to go and find another job. But of all the things I've done it's the longest I've worked anywhere and I have no plans to leave so I know I'm on to a good thing at the moment. And they are a lovely company that I work for, they are a small company, there's only ten of us working there. When I started there, there was only three of us, so it's grown quite quickly but they've always been quite good, particularly actually when Ellis died, you know. I had the time off then and they looked after me, it's almost like a family, you know, they take care of you and see you right I suppose.

And how long have you been married?

Nine years on Wednesday just gone.

And where did you marry?

We married in Beverly; we had a registry office do; my husband is not religious at all but we had a blessing at my mother's church to keep her happy. We had a very small wedding but we had a big party. On the night there was about twenty people there during the day but on the night do there was about one hundred and eighty people so it was really good, I really enjoyed it. We got married when we were young and poor so it was all a bit on a shoe string but it was good we had a good time and that's the main thing.

And what's important for you now, going forward with your life?

Well making sure that my son is healthy and happy and gets everything that he needs so obviously that entails keeping him [inaudible] type of thing and raising money for FSID and just being happy that's it. I don't care more than that I'd like to win the lottery but I don't really care too much if I don't. I won this lottery haven't I, so I've got to play this here but yes, keeping healthy and happy that's my main thing.

And who are you doing this for today, taking part in One & Other?

Myself absolutely yes. I just think you can't do it for anyone else like when people say oy, you need to lose weight. Well you think you have to do it for yourself and that's exactly, this is exactly the same if I wasn't doing it for myself it wouldn't be the same. I just think it's something very, very different and that I'm at the point now where I can't wait to get up there so yes definitely myself.

Good thank you very much.

Thank you.



One & Other Project

END OF RECORDING