

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

2431/2/RBI

ENGLISH (Specification 1900)

UNIT 1 Non-Fiction, Media and Information

READING BOOKLET INSERT

HIGHER TIER

TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2007

Morning
Time: 1 hour 45 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- The material in this READING BOOKLET INSERT is for use with the questions in Section A of the question paper.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

Bob Dylan: *Chronicles Volume 1*

In this extract from his autobiography, the American singer and songwriter, Bob Dylan, describes some of the difficulties that resulted from his fame and from being considered 'a spokesman for his generation'.

Truth was that I wanted to get out of the rat race. Having children changed my life and segregated me from just about everybody and everything that was going on. Outside of my family, nothing held any real interest for me and I was seeing everything through different glasses. Being born and raised in America, the country of freedom and independence, I had always cherished the values and ideas of equality and liberty. I was determined to raise my children with those ideals.

As far as I knew, I didn't belong to anybody then or now. I had a wife and children whom I loved more than anything else in the world. I was trying to provide for them, keep out of trouble, but the big bugs in the press kept promoting me as the mouthpiece, spokesman, or even conscience of a generation. That was funny. All I'd ever done was sing songs that were dead straight and expressed powerful new realities. I had very little in common with and knew even less about a generation that I was supposed to be the voice of. I'd left my hometown only ten years earlier, wasn't vociferating the opinions of anybody.

People think that fame and riches translate into power, that it brings glory and honour and happiness. Maybe it does, but sometimes it doesn't. I found myself vulnerable and with a family to protect. If you looked in the press, though, you saw me being portrayed as anything but that.

Early on, Woodstock had been very hospitable to us. I had actually discovered the place long before moving to a house there. It was there that intruders started to break in day and night. Tensions mounted almost immediately and peace was hard to come by. At one time the place had been a quiet refuge, but now, no more. Roadmaps to our homestead must have been posted in all fifty states for gangs of dropouts and druggies. At first, it was merely the nomadic homeless making illegal entry – seemed harmless enough, but then rogue radicals looking for the Prince of Protest began to arrive – unaccountable-looking characters, gargoyle-looking gals, scarecrows, stragglers looking to party, raid the pantry. A friend of mine had given me a couple of Colt single-shot repeater pistols, and I also had a clip-fed Winchester blasting rifle around, but it was awful to think about what could be done with those things. The authorities, the chief of police (Woodstock had about three cops) had told me that if anyone was shot accidentally or even shot at as a warning, it would be me that would be going to the lockup. Not only that, but creeps thumping their boots across our roof could even take me to court if any of them fell off. This was so unsettling. I wanted to set fire to these people. Woodstock had turned into a nightmare, a place of chaos. Now it was time to scramble out of there in search of some new silver lining and that's what we did. We moved to New York City for a while in hopes to demolish my identity, but it wasn't any better there. It was even worse.

Eventually, we tried moving West – tried a few different places, but in short time reporters would come sniffing around in hopes to gain some secret – maybe I'd confess some sin. Our address would be printed in the local press and then the same thing would start. The press never let up. Reporters would shoot questions at me and I would tell them repeatedly that I was not a spokesman for anything or anybody and that I was only a musician. They'd look into my eyes as if to find some evidence of bourbon whiskey and handfuls of amphetamines. I had no idea what they were thinking. Later an article would hit the streets with the headline "Spokesman Denies That He's a Spokesman". I felt like a piece of meat that someone had thrown to the dogs. My wife, when she married me, had no idea of what she was getting into. Me neither.

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Big Brother: compulsive or repulsive?

In the following articles, two writers give their opinions of the television programme, Celebrity Big Brother, and its contestants.

COMPULSIVE by QUENTIN LETTS

This is, I know, the equivalent of admitting to a gastronomic fondness for Pot Noodles, but I'm enjoying Celebrity Big Brother – if only because it is showing us how ghastly many of the participants are.

Hasn't it been interesting how plain some so-called glamorous media figures have been looking? Take away the usual studio make-up, the wrinkle-friendly arc lights, and they are not quite the usual glamour pussies.

And I was gripped by how badly one of the group minded being chucked out. Either she is a brilliant actress, or this squawking, pouting, deflated balloon of a B-grade celebrity is truly a woman of gargantuan vanity.

Just as celebrity magazines are often filled with 'famous' people one has never heard of, so Celebrity Big Brother has introduced me to so-called celebs who had previously not touched my radar.

There is one youth who I now understand is a popular musician. Well, I'd never have guessed it! Nor, before seeing the programme, am I sure I could have told you who the sweet young entertainer was who spent much of the time trying to tell us how guilty she felt about voting others off. Now she really IS an actress.

It is a remarkable programme that can make your average macho sportsman look any more of an idiot than he is already, but Celebrity Big Brother managed. Not only did the character concerned make a complete horse of himself, but his presence also led to the others making cheap fun of his physical attributes.

The show has also confirmed one's suspicions that a certain popular comedian is a likeable guy. Can any of us, if told we had to be cooped up with the rest of the motley crew, promise that we, too, would not have tried to tunnel for freedom?

So thank you, Red Nose Day, for doing to these stars what a liberal application of acid does to the decks of a yacht, removing the varnish to expose the wood underneath.

REPULSIVE by DR RAJ PERSAUD

The most ironic thing about Celebrity Big Brother is that the famous names taking part seem to be suffering from more stress and emotional turmoil than their counterparts in the non-celebrity version.

In the original Big Brother, before entering the house, all candidates were supposedly subjected to a careful psychological screening programme to weed out the 'vulnerable'.

But it appears it was the celebrities who really needed to be assessed before being allowed into the house.

Also the celebrities do not appear to have access to a therapist while staying in the house; in the original version a counsellor was apparently on hand 24 hours a day and available for a private unfiled consultation in the diary room.

In retrospect, this may have been essential, for a striking aspect of Celebrity Big Brother has been watching the inability and reluctance of the famous to offer any kind of real emotional support to each other when they show signs of stress.

This was in marked contrast to the non-celebrity version, where household members were frequently seen comforting each other.

But one of the theories about the motivation to seek fame in the first place is a craving for acceptance and an attempt to obtain self-affirmation from the approval and attention of others.

So perhaps it was always on the cards that celebrities would take rejection harder than was perhaps anticipated by those planning what was intended to be a light-hearted charity programme for Comic Relief.

Perhaps the celebrities have been partly responsible themselves for creating a more stressful environment within the Big Brother house – after all, there is nothing more isolating than finding yourself amid the supremely self-obsessed.

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