

NOW WE'RE TOLKIN'



By Helen Marketti

Give Me A Chance



Gail Renard was 16 years old in 1969 when she climbed up a fire escape behind the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, Canada. She was bound and determined to meet her idol, John Lennon. He and Yoko were staying at the hotel for their "Bed In" for Peace. She wanted to interview John for her high school newspaper. Gail not only met John and Yoko but became their personal assistant and friend during their 8-day peace campaign. John encouraged Gail to become a writer and helped her along the way. She was offered to continue touring with John and Yoko after their stay in Montreal was over but Gail decided to pursue her own interests. She had an opportunity that many Beatle fans could only achieve in their dreams. John Lennon seemed to have a sixth sense about people and he knew Gail was a genuine soul that he could trust. *Give Me A Chance* (Walker Books, London) is a rock and roll story written by a fan who became a friend to one of the world's well loved rock icons. The reader will feel as though they are on the journey along with Gail and she describes in great detail the atmosphere, feeling and emotion.

What gave you the idea to write a book?

I'll always be grateful to John Lennon for everything he did for me, including giving me confidence which, for a teenager, is a priceless gift. One hears so many terrible stories about our heroes these days, I wanted to tell a happy one. John was a kind man and a good friend to me. I wanted to thank John by getting his peace message out into the world again.

How did your article ever turn out for your high school newspaper?

I'd like to think it was the best article they'd ever had!

Why do you think you were accepted rather easily into John & Yoko's world at that time?

A mutual friend told me John could decide within 20 seconds whether he could trust someone or not and he was always right. After all, I came in peace! We also shared a sense of humor.

Did you ever keep in touch with Derek Taylor?

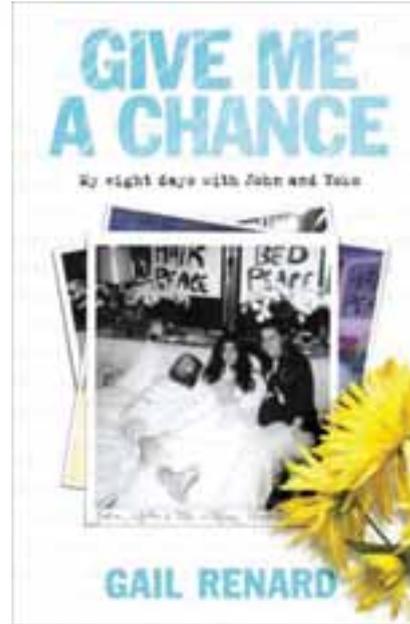
(Derek Taylor was the press officer for The Beatles)

Not as much as I would have liked and unfortunately he died too soon; a lovely gentle man and a gentleman.

You were given an opportunity at a young age that many people dream about their entire lifetime, yet you seemed to understand and appreciate the opportunity. What life lessons did you learn from that experience?

The main thing I learned from John and Yoko is that you can change the world, or at least your bit of it. Everyone laughed when the Lennons announced they were going to lie in bed for eight days for peace but John said if they're going to be giving interviews non-stop, they might as well be comfortable!

The Bed In led to 500,000 people marching on Washington six months later to protest the Viet Nam War. They were singing Give Peace A Chance. It's said that the Bed In was instrumental in



shortening the war. That's a powerful lesson to learn.

I admire you for turning down the opportunity to travel with them and perhaps work full time. I understand you had wanted to explore and live your own life rather than through someone else's schedule. Do you believe John admired your strength for sticking with what you felt was right for yourself?

I think John got over it! We stayed friends.

You met several celebrities during that time. What did you come away with after meeting them? Did you find them to be "just normal people?"

Like John and Yoko, the celebrities were all passionate, talented people who wanted to make the world a better place. We all loved coming together at that special time.

It was eight days of working and speaking towards peace, how do you think that message is coming across

today?

We need John and Yoko's peace message today more than ever so let's keep spreading it!

Please share any current projects or writings that you are working on...

I've written various television series but funnily enough, I'm just about to start on a sequel to my book *Give Me A Chance*. There's still another story about John to tell...

Is there anything else you wanted to mention or discuss?

John's ambition was to write a peace anthem that would last for all time. Let's sing Give Peace A Chance every chance we can and make it so.

Give Me A Chance is available through Amazon and Gail's web site:

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