The Man Who Walked Between The Towers Transcript

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Kia ora everyone. Look we've just read this book 'The Man Who Walked Between The Towers'; we realized it was all about Philippe Petit; we found out exactly what he did to actually

set himself up to walk between those towers; we found out exactly what happened as he did

walk between the towers; and we also worked out what happened to him and the towers afterwards.

I don't know about you guys but I think it's an amazing story. I had no idea about it

until I actually discovered this book. And now since then I've done a lot of research on YouTube all about him.

So we talked before about what possible writing we could do as a result of having read this book. And we decided that maybe this could be our task - that we're just gonna select one episode - an episode from the story - and we're gonna see if we can make that come alive for the reader. So one episode - make it come alive - what

sort of writing is that did I say? Moment.... [moment in time]

Moment In Time. So we just take that one moment and we see if we can make that come alive.

And we brainstormed the various episodes we could have a go at making come alive,

we talked about the moment when he goes down on the side of the arrow; when he goes into the building illegally near the beginning; the moment he steps onto the wire or lies down on the wire; steps off the wire towards the end; when he's in the courtroom having been arrested; and those ellipsis signs suggest there are other episodes. But we had also decided, that that was the moment we would actually write

about. That was the moment we had selected, to see if we could make it come alive. I want to remind you... I'm going to stand up for a second... I don't look anything like Philippe Petit the guy; Certainly I'm a lot older than what he was then -

but I am going to pretend I'm him, because at that particular moment stepping onto the wire, I'm standing there holding that balancing pole, one foot in the air - ready to step onto the wire.

It's just that moment, that I wanna see if we can make it come alive.

Now....

[thinking] um... yeah, yeah, yeah.

Look, if I'm Philippe Petit am I writing in the first or the third person?

[First person?] - Yeah. What's the first person mean?

It's when - if you're writing the story you go I...

Right so it's I rather than he or they? [yeah] Okay we all

understand that? Okay - so I can write down here first person.... excuse my messy writing ...

um I'm also thinking, if we're gonna actually do this and make it come alive make it really vivid - shall we write it like - it's already happened, or it's happening now? [Happening now?] All right so what

sort of tense is that if it's happening now?

[present]... so we're gonna have to go at writing it in the present tense. So it'll be in the first person and in the present tense... thank you guys.

Now, don't know about you, but if I was to start writing about that moment and stepping onto the wire, I couldn't go straight into it - I'd probably need to do a little bit of planning, a little bit of preparation beforehand. So I'm going to ask you some questions and I'm going to see if you can give me some precise answers and I'll jot them down there. Now, at that moment standing there - where exactly was he? [On the Southern Tower?]

On the South Tower? Of what [Twin Towers] - Twin Towers,

okay so I'll put ... South

Tower and I'll put then TT for Twin Towers

and that was in New York City wasn't it ?

Alright so I might put NYC. All right so he was right on the corner wasn't he? Shall I put that down 'corner' - was it the corner? Well it was the corner of the towers that he was on? [Yeah he was on the edge]

Oh - edge is a nice word... I'll get that down - 'edge'.

Right, when exactly was this? [It's like mid 1970s -1976...]

Yeah it was August it was actually August

74. Okay and that was - was it the 6th of August ?

[Yeah] I'll put 6 of August, seventy four-

Who said dawn? That's really important I reckon, because it means that there wouldn't be many people around. Okay so you've got the sun going up... now - just briefly,

what was he wearing? [Black] he was all black wasn't he okay like mine

[Black shoes] yeah yeah black shoes - ah like ballet shoes I'll just put black up there. Now these are the important questions to me. I'm standing there - I'm looking up - at that moment, what do you think I see? [Maybe like a nice sunrise ?]

oh you see the sun and what would the sun be doing? Sun rising [Yes sun rising] alight sun rising...

all right I can put that at there - sun rising...

but I think he also saw something that were white up there... [clouds?] Clouds! What were the clouds doing ?

Don't want to say moving - that's too boring,

we can get a better word than moving.

[Dashing?] dashing? oh silent clouds dashing...

[Drifting?] Drifting? Can we go with drifting is that okay?

What were you gonna say? [Traveling ?] Traveling.

I quite like drifting, if that's okay. Not that the other ones

aren't good too... all right so we'll put clouds -

[He also saw like birds in the sky] Oh hang on, hold

that idea - fabulous - I'll be back to you... clouds drifting. All right and you said he saw birds, what sort of birds in particular, can you remember ?

[Seagulls] - they were seagulls

[Then he said they saw birds all around him].

Ah right now we don't want to say they were flying that's too boring!

Give me a better word [gliding] - gliding, any other words?

[Dancing?] Dancing! Birds dancing! Oh that's quite nice! Any other words you want to think of?

[Flapping around] - Flapping around - what was your word?

[gliding] - can I go gliding and dancing? All right, why not.

I'll go seagulls too, just to make it more precise. Sea-gulls

gliding - don't have a plan, so I'll just put a little mark there this is the whole - 'and dancing'. Oh and I often think of clouds dancing as well - all right, now ...

I'm standing there, I'm looking across, my eyes are looking across - what do you think my eyes are rested on? [The other tower]. The other tower.

[His friends on the other side?] friends on the other side, any other ideas ?

[The end of the other rope] - oh I love that idea!

So his eyes are focused on the end of the... that's at the end of the journey isn't it? So he sees the end. Can I put 'end of journey'? All right.

'end - of - journey....'

Now -

If he was silly enough to look down at that moment, what do you think he would see?

[The street?] He'd see the street. What would be in the street?

[Cars?] Ahhh - Now we're in

New York - so there'd be one predominant color: [Yellow]. Why? [Taxis]. Taxis!

And what would these yellow

taxis, these yellow cabs be doing? Not driving?

[Maybe stuck in traffic?] Of course, cause rush hour may just be starting mightn't it?

Because this is a huge City New York

[The text also said that a woman apparently came out of a subway,- maybe he could see the subway?] Oh he could see the subway as well? Well done, good listening, good thinking. I'll get those yellow cabs down - so 'yellow

cabs' ... "stuck" I'll put.... Now yours was the subway - but I'm also thinking... that he probably can see people, but will they look like people?

[No they will look like dots] Dots or? [Ants ?]

All right can I go with ants?

Ant like people ? Ant - like - people....

Now - they're rushing to get to work -

can we come up with a better word than rushing?

I'm thinking of one beginning was "sca" scur....

[Scurry !]

I hurry but scurry - like Murray - but scurry.

Alright scurrying... now last question ...

he's standing there, I'm standing there - because I'm writing in the first person, pretending to be him - and I'm ready to put my foot down...

what's going through my head?

[Don't fall / Will I make it?]

Don't fall - Will I make it...

[Happy that he's doing something that he actually wants?]

- yeah, yeah "I'm really happy about this".

[The book said that he wasn't scared.] He wasn't scared -

I don't believe he thought he would fall.

[He... also said that - the only thing that worried him was that people wouldn't see him do it.]
Yes - "I hope they're looking up!" Okay, okay - I'm gonna do this one,

and I'm going to suggest that he's thinking: 'I have waited all my life to do this'.

Is that okay?

I - have - waited...

all - my - life...

Shall I say 'to do this' or 'to be here'?

[To be here.] What do you reckon?

[To do this.] To do this....

Thank you, thank you - look guys I know it's a bit messy

and it's a bit crammed - but it's only my planning

It doesn't really matter, does it - it's just to guide me into it.

So I think I'm actually ready to write.

Gonna make that moment come alive;

I know where he is; when this is; what he's wearing; what does he see; and what's going through his head. I know I'm going to write it in the first person and in the present tense - because we know it's all about 'moments in time' - I'm thinking anything else? I think I'll probably gonna have to make sure that I put a bit of detail in - add detail "D for Detail"...

What about words? Can I use any old words or ?

What are you going to call... - because I just love the fact that we've got words like us scurrying, gliding and ... gliding and dancing, drifting.

I'm going to call those rich vocabulary - okay?

[Adjectives] Oh - are they adjectives?

Is gliding and dancing... ? [They're adverbs!] Are they adverbs?

[Aren't they nouns?] Oh good go!

(whispering) They're actually verbs...

Okay it's all right though, it's all right okay, well I think I'll just call it 'rich vocabulary': the best words we can. So I'll put "R" there...

All right guys - now. We'll just do a couple of sentences together see how we get on.

I think I'll start on that line there, so I've got that one free

to make changes, if I need to.

Now I'm just trying to think - how am I going to start this off? Should I start off with "I step on the wire", because it's going to be "I". Or should I start it off with "As I step on the wire"? Or should I start it off with "Stepping on the wire"?

[You could start it off "I took a deep breath and stepped on.]

Oh but we're going to do it in present tense aren't we?

So have a go at that in present tense?

[I just took a taking...] No no, you're right...

Instead of I took...

[While taking a deep breath I stepped on?]

'I stepped on'? Or 'I step on' ?
[I step on]

All right - should we try that?
[Yeah] All right, say it again to me ...

While..... [I take a deep breath whilst....]
Now, you started with while...

[While taking a deep breath, I step on]. All right okay I'll have a go at that guys...

While... taking - a - deep - breath...
How the heng am I going to write 'breath'?

[b r e a t h]

Oh you're right because if I put an 'E' on the end it would be breathe wouldn't it?

While taking a deep breath ... I step on?

I think I'm going to put a comma after that...
cause I've started the sentence with while...

so in fact it's going to become a complex sentence....
While taking a deep breath... I - stepped - on...

I step on what? I step on .... ?

[The start.... or at the edge of the ... ?]
Say it again....?

[... I'm not sure - should we say start - or the edge of the wire?]

All right "I step on" - should I say "step onto the edge" -
or "step ON the edge"?

[You could say the wobbly rope...]
Say it again ?

[The wobbly rope]
Oh I hope it's not too wobbly!

Otherwise he'd uh - yeah [laughing] !
Well - what do you reckon?

[What about "I step on the eight inch thick metal rope"?]

Ohhh! yeah [chatter] ..... [Wasn't it seven inch?] Yeah, 7 or 8.

Rather than put a number, shall we just say "The... " a word meantime....

[The inch long rope]

The "inch"... is it long though?
[The inch thick rope !]

The inch thick rope - shall we have a go at that? Is that ok?

Alright, "I step on... " - shall we say 'step on to the edge of the inch thick rope' -
or just 'step on the inch thick rope' ? What do you reckon?

[Probably the second one.] Alright, 'step on to' - is that alright? [Yeah.]

'I step on to - the - edge - of - the - inch thick.....' now should we say rope or wire?

[Wire...] Wire.

All right ... I'll read it again: 'While taking a deep breath, I step on to the edge of the inch thick wire.... and....'

I want him to... I want him to actually see something, at this stage. Should we have him seeing something looking up, across or down? What do you reckon? [Up] Up. What's he see when he looks up?

Look at the planning guys - so the sun rising; the clouds drifting; the seagulls gliding and dancing; which one of those three are you gonna choose for him? [Seagulls!]

The seagulls drifting and dancing? All right -

"I.... and - see -

- the -

-seagulls -

- drifting -

- and -

- dancing"... who gave me 'in the cool air' [I did.. Caleb] - can I put that in Caleb? [Yes]

[You could do 'the cool breeze'?]

[Yeah - 'the cool breeze'?]

Oh you think breeze is better than air? [Yeah.]

Yeah, it probably is isn't it?

"... In the cool breeze' - don't forget a full stop Murray.

All right, guys can you read this with me, because we might just do that as a first sentence but we might want to make changes to it. "While taking a deep breath,

I step onto the edge of the thick wire and see the seagulls drifting and dancing in the cool breeze.

Are there any changes you want to make to it?

Miranda? [I think maybe on the wall taking a

step on the edge, it sounds like it's like... -

it doesn't really sound like it's the beginning.]

Ohh ok....

[Maybe say, "I step on to the start?"]

Oh the start...

[Or yeah, the beginning...]

[The tip of the wire?]

The tip of .... The tip ?

"While taking a deep breath, I step on to the tip of the inch thick wire". What do you reckon? [It wouldn't be the tip, because the tip would be coiled around something.... yeah...] All right, okay [Maybe the 'start' yeah.]

The start?

["The start" or "the edge of the start"]

What do you reckon? [Yeah I think the start'.]

Okay so I'll take out 'edge' and put 'start'? See how we go.

I like your thinking. "While taking a deep breath, I step on to the start..." Mmmm still sounds a bit strange doesn't it? [Yeah] Do you know what I'm going to be really bold and suggest we don't actually need "the start" or "the edge". We just...

"I step on to the inch thick wire".

What do you reckon?

[Yeah that sounds better...]

"I step on to...."

Right. Thank you though because that was really good thinking before. That's what writers do hey, they play around with it until they think they've got it right. 'Inch thick wire and...' I'm a bit worried about that word 'see'. Sounds a bit boring to me. [Witness ?] And witness? Notice?

Note? [Watch?] Watch. What do you reckon?

[Fix my eyes on?] And fix my eyes on !

[Watch and fix my eyes seem to get when you're focusing on them...]

Oh but that might be the... at that moment though that might be what he does actually put his eyes on, because he sees movement.

[You could say glance because....] Oh and glance -

all right okay, shall we go with glance? [Yeah.] All right -

"While taking a deep breath, I step on to the inch thick wire and glance..." [At the...] .."and glance...

... at the sea g..." Now would I say 'the' seagulls?

or 'glance at seagulls'?

[I feel like just 'seagulls'.] I think so too, because I think if you say

'the segulls', it sounds like they're the only seagulls

in the world! All right so we'll take the "the" out.

"While taking a deep breath, I step on to the inch thick wire and glance at seagulls drifting and dancing in the cool breeze. Oh I quite like it !

[Would drifting be there though, because it sounds like they're not really flying they're just kind of ...

frozen in mid-air... just moving forward ?]

Oh so would we take drifting out and just leave dancing? [You could say something like... gliding? I think like gliding would be cool like...] [Yeah because you did actually do gliding but you... if you look on your planning...you said ...] Oh okay... put in the gliding there instead of drifting?

[Yeah because on the planning it's 'clouds drifting'.]

You're quite right - oh silly me, of course, of course.

That just shows the importance of going back to

the planning hey? So we see 'seagulls gliding'.

Do we need the end 'dancing'? I quite like

the end 'dancing' but do we need it as well ? [umm...]

All right okay, one last go guys; "While taking a deep breath, I step on to the inch thick wire and glance at seagulls gliding and dancing

in the cool breeze." Yes, what were you going to say?

[I was just thinking like you know, in one sentence, does there need to be like, two ands?]

Yeah, I think we get away with it because that 'and'

actually takes us into something the character's doing and the next 'and' takes us [in to] about the seagulls. I know your point, but I think we can get away with it - I think we can get away with it. I'm going to take that full stop out.

[You could... add some speech at the end of that sentence, by saying 'and dance in the cool breeze'. It'll be like, I did it - or something?]

I think that's... that would be a neat thing to go on to wouldn't it? I haven't got room to do that - I love that idea

That's maybe where I'll go next with it. I just look, I know this a little bit boring but I'm just looking back to 'inch thick'. Is it one word,

two words - or should it be two words with a hyphen in between them? What's your gut feeling about that?

You think a hyphen, shall I try it - see if it looks right?

[It doesn't look right.] It doesn't look right to you? All right in that case... it does to me, but I don't know everything, so I might underline it with the idea I'll go back to that later and just check it out, when I get a dictionary or whatever.

Guys look - I think we'll leave it at that - you have done brilliantly to help me just with that one sentence - and remember I said to you before - it's actually a complex sentence, because you've started us off with "while' - I love that - and being a complex sentence, the first part of it 'while taking a deep breath,' I've got to put that comma there.

And then I love how we've actually played around with the words to try and make them as rich as possible, to come alive. Just very quickly guys: have we written in the first person? [Yes / agreement]. Which is "I" isn't it. Have we stuck to the present tense all around it? [yes / agreement.]

Oh because remember that little bit you and I did at the beginning where you told me a sentence in the past

Where we actually went back...

Do you think we've got any details? Starting to put any detail? Give me an example Miranda ?

[The cool breeze?] Yeah and the wire wasn't just wire, it was the inch thick wire, wasn't it ?

Yeah okay. We got any great words there?

What do you reckon?

[Yeah, um I think so because we've got like 'gliding' and 'dancing'.] Fabulous, fabulous, yeah, yeah, yeah.

All right guys look, if we had all the time in the world - what I would

get you guys to do now, is to: choose an episode for you;

maybe do your own little bit of planning -

though you could actually use ours if you wanted to;

And then have a go at an open sentence or two of your own.

We'll do that later - thank you very much.

[Thank you] All right.

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