

*Roger Waters wants to talk politics, and wants the fans of his music to listen to his views. What follows, then, is Waters talking politics with investigative journalist James Ball in a wide-ranging interview – covering protest, propaganda, Russia Today, Julian Assange, Ukraine, Syria, Russia, Israel and more. It has been lightly edited for clarity and readability but is otherwise largely untouched.*

**Ball:** Your tour is quite striking from the get go – your announcer says, “If you’re one of those ‘I love Pink Floyd but I can’t stand Waters’s politics’ people, you might do well to fuck off to the bar, right now.” Have you had anyone do so yet?

**Waters:** Do you know what is really interesting is that you are talking to the announcer and hardly anyone notices.

**Ball:** I did not notice that. No. Wow.

**Waters:** Well, that's me being posh, that's me being an announcer. But actually, that is just my ordinary voice talking in a conversational way. When I've got a slight smile playing at the corners of my mouth because I think what I'm saying is funny. And it is. And they do like it, I think.

**Ball:** Oh yeah. It struck me as playful. I was just wondering if anyone had taken a huff at it. I would've thought it's unlikely if they've come to see your show. But you never know, do you?

**Waters:** I think it's very important philosophically to say that at the beginning of the show. Because obviously over the last 50 years or so, I've had a lot of people saying, “Oh, why doesn't he just play the hits? We're not interested in his political views or whatever” ... Well, clearly in the past it has, when people come to a show of mine and have not noticed over the last 50 years that I'm a very political person and there is politics in almost ... It's either politics or heartbreak in all of my songs.

**Ball:** It's very obviously a very political show, and there's lots of quite specific points on it, several of which I want to raise. But if you were trying to say what connected them: What was the overall message of it? What would you want someone walking away to think of the political side of it, what would that be?

**Waters:** There's two main things. One, politically my platform is very small. It's just the Declaration of Universal Human Rights in Paris in 1948. All 29 or 30 articles, however many there are. So, that's one thing that is there. Now I did [have] something else in my mind. And it's gone for the moment. But that runs through the whole show because that's the base. There's a fundamental question that we all get to ask ourselves.

**Ball:** Don't worry at all. I mean, I quite liked the idea that you talked about in the show of the bar, and this idea of opposing people taking on that. Just for your info, I'm not a music journalist, I'm a general journalist, so this is a politics chat. But I do like the idea of that challenging conversation. I don't think people do them often now. Have you had any success making the bar real around yourself, do you think?

**Waters:** Well, it's interesting that you should come up with the bar because that's the other idea that is central to the whole show that I couldn't remember: Paris 1948 and the bar. Those are the two things. The bar is revolutionary. It's a revolutionary idea to have it in a rock and roll show. And it works. I can't tell you how exciting it is to find out every night how well it works. People get it immediately.

So when I sit there at the piano and go, so this piano here represents the bar and blah blah, blah... So we can exchange our feelings and ideas freely and frankly without fear of retribution. We are in a safe place here in this room, all 16,000 of us. And they get it. And by the end of the show, I mean, I can't tell you how ... The second time we do the bar ... Well, you've seen it. And you hear the audience responding to this stuff. And the band are having a drink around the piano, actually physically drinking... And it's a beautiful moment.

I'm sorry to sound like an excited teenager, but that's how I feel. Because I've been doing rock and roll in arenas and stadiums for 50 years. And I've never experienced this. So part of what goes on in This Is Not a Drill is an expression of the fact that I am no longer 13, 14, 15, 16 years old, wearing all black, standing in the corner, scared shitless of everything and incapable of sharing feelings really with people. It's taken me a long time to figure out how to actually do that. So here I am now, 79 years old, and finally I feel comfortable on stage.

**Ball:** One incredibly striking message on the show is the statement, you can't have occupation and human rights. Why was that one important to display among the others?

**Waters:** Well, clearly that's a reference to Palestine. That comes in Deja Vu. Funnily enough, I was looking at my stick from the last show that we did ... I look at the show every night between one show and the next show. And I write notes. And then when we meet again at the next place, and I speak to Sean Evans, who's my conspirator in all things visual in the show, and we change stuff all the time. And I was toying after seeing the last show, should I put in, when it says fuck the occupation, I want to put "fuck the Israeli occupation." So I want to be a bit more specific. And then, oh no, the words are too long, it won't look-

**Ball:** It won't look as good.

**Waters:** Yeah. Well, and these are all, we work on it in very great detail to try and give it the most emotional impact.

But it's true of every occupation. It's true of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. It's true of all occupations, of all land by any imperialist power. It's true of Iraq in 2003. It's true of Kenya in 1956 or whenever it was. Or Suez in '56 would be a better example. What with us being English and everything.

And this is stuff that ... It's really weird. We live in a time, as I know you know, Ball, where in America where I live, the mainstream media, that's all television, all network, all cable, all newspapers, everything, except some of the stuff you see on the internet, like The Grayzone or The Real News. I won't try and mention them all. And some good blogs that you can find from people who have good things to say. But the rest of it's completely controlled. It's monopolized by the powers that be and by the government. And people who work for that media don't know what it's like in the ... Oh my God, Rolling Stone must be part of it. I don't know.

**Ball:** If it helps, I mostly work for a not-for-profit. So I don't work for corporate media, this is a freelance gig.

**Waters:** All right, well, I'm very glad that you're doing it then, so that I can be open. Well, I would anyway be open and honest with you.

So there's that, so there's the narrative that we're being fed by the propaganda monsters. And you probably notice the word propaganda a lot in "Another Brick" II and III and "Happiness Days" and things.

So that's another big point that I'm making is that we're fed this stuff from the cradle to the grave. And that it's no wonder that our minds are fertile ground if somebody wants to tell us that the Russians are evil and the Chinese are. And that we are really good. And that what we're doing is spreading truth and light and democracy and freedom and liberty. That's why they hate us, because they're evil.

And of course, we – when I say we, I'm now speaking as a taxpayer in the United States – are not. We are the most evil of all by a factor of at least 10 times. We kill more people. We interfere in more people's elections. We, the American empire, is doing all this shit.

But the man in the street, if you say that to him, and I'm saying it in this show, and when you do, they're a bit surprised. But because we're in the bar together, they actually listen and they go, hang on a minute, he doesn't seem such a bad old cove. Maybe I wouldn't mind sitting down and having a drink with him and talking to him about things. Maybe he's not completely insane.

**Ball:** I wonder though whether someone, if you pick someone on the street in Ukraine right now, whether they would take that statement and go, 'He is completely insane.' I mean, you have said, and I agree, that Russia's occupation of Ukraine counts as a violation of human rights. We've seen independent evidence of absolute atrocities there, not just civilian cluster munitions, gang rape, you name it-

**Waters:** You've seen it, but hey, but you're-

**Ball:** I'm not saying it doesn't happen elsewhere.

**Waters:** No, that's not why I'm interrupting you, Ball, I'm interrupting you because, yeah, you've seen it. But you've seen it on what I've just described to you as western propaganda. It's exactly the obverse of saying, Russian propaganda, Russians interfered with our election, Russians did that. It's all lies, lies, lies, lies. Well, if you think that what you are seeing coming from the mainstream media is not western propaganda-

**Ball:** Waters, I'm in a good position here, I'm not relying on the mainstream media for these accounts. I know Ukrainians, I know Ukrainian reporters who are out there. I know British reporters who've been out there and witnessed this stuff themselves. They've seen the mass graves with their own eyes. They are talking to these people.

**Waters:** Well, yeah, maybe. No, I'm only saying maybe because I read all those reports too. And I search them very carefully to try and divine the truth. And also to see where the information comes from and who it ...

Don't forget, I'm on a kill list that is supported by the Ukrainian government. I'm on the fucking list and they've killed people recently. There was that young Dugina woman in Paris who I think they were trying to bomb her father. No, in Moscow. They were trying to bomb her father-in-law [her father] and they killed her. But when they kill you, they write liquidated across your picture. Well, I'm one of those fucking pictures. And when I read stuff, which I have done in blogs and things, criticizing me for my ... I always go and look and see where it came from. And it's amazing how often when I've done the hunt and hunted it down, it is da, da, da.ukraine.org.

So, don't run away with the idea that the reporting that you are getting is real. Because I, from my point of view, would find it very easy to believe all the reporting that I read that say, that's a load of rubbish, this is actually the ...

And one of the problems with getting to the truth is that where I live in the United States of America, the first thing I did on February the 24th was go to RT, that morning, gone.

**Ball:** For what it's worth, I said I thought that was a stupid decision. But yes.

**Waters:** What would you call a stupid decision, hang on, what?

**Ball:** Cutting off RT.

**Waters:** I agree with you entirely. It's crazy to cut off anybody.

**Ball:** In that case, I just think as well, it gives a false balance as if, in Russia, if you call the war a war, you can face up to 15 years in prison. In the US, if you say Ukraine should surrender or it's a special military operation or whatever, you are going to get criticized at a couple of outlets. But by banning RT, you can make media in the two seem almost equivalent. Which they're not. Media is a lot freer in the US than in Russia.

**Waters:** That may well be true. When this is brought up to me, I always say, I don't live in Russia, I don't speak Russian, I can't really comment. You may well be right. I tend to think that you probably are right. And it's draconian and authoritarian and autocratic and all of those things. I certainly have no love for Putin. Even if it was only that he rides around bare chested on a fucking horse pretending to kill polar bears, that would be enough to turn me off forever because it's pitiful. It's so putrid and daft.

And so it's very hard to ... So I'm no Putin lover. And I certainly wouldn't dream of apologizing for Putin. But on the other hand, I have been reading everything that's come out of [Ukraine] since 2004 through 2008, through 2014. I did follow the coup in 2014. So I was listening to Victoria Nuland talking to the American ambassador and say, who are we going to have for president in the ... What? What the fuck business is it of yours?

Well, we're the American empire, we decide who rules. Yeah, but this bloke was democratically elected to be the president of the Ukraine by the Ukrainian people. What are you talking about? You can't depose Yanukovich or whatever his bloody name was. And they say, yeah, we can, watch. And they did.

**Ball:** Ukrainian politics and Ukrainian elections are murky. The issue that I struggle with is, I think we both agree, whether we agree or not in the extent of war crimes, we both agree Russia invaded Ukraine-

**Waters:** Though we don't agree that Russia annexed the Crimea, which is the story that was ... No, it didn't.

**Ball:** Well, we can pause there. In the spirit of ... Russia invaded Ukraine, they sent heavy military to try and take the capital. That failed. They're still occupying lots of areas against their will. Why is resisting that occupation not a good cause?

**Waters:** Why is what?

**Ball:** Resisting that occupation not a good cause?

**Waters:** Because it's an unnecessary war. And those people should not be dying. And Russia should not have been encouraged to invade the Ukraine after they tried for 20 years to avoid it by suggesting diplomatic measures to Western governments. Like saying, please adhere to the agreements that Baker made with Gorbachev in 1991 I think. Where they shook hands on the deal that they would not encroach into the ex-Warsaw Pact countries beyond the eastern borders of Germany. And they agreed, the Americans agreed to that at the time. But they then went, oh no, we didn't mean to agree to that.

**Ball:** Isn't that a very imperialist view?

**Waters:** Yeah, it is, that you can encroach on other people's—

**Ball:** No, that you're taking, that countries don't have the right to self-determine who their allies are?

**Waters:** Or where they deploy their nuclear missiles. Go back to Cuba in 1962, which is a perfect analogy for the Ukraine right now. And if you don't think it is, you can read the letters to Zelenskyy that I've written.

**Ball:** I've read them.

**Waters:** If you want, I'll send you a response to that from Ray McGovern who's an ex-CIA analyst. You may have heard of him. He's very active politically now, who said, "Excellent letter, Waters. You're so right to bring up the absolute equivalence of the Cuban Missile Crisis and how close we came to being destroyed by that." And I don't think that any of us should forget just how dangerous this war in the Ukraine is. And how leaders of countries actually behave, and why aren't Biden and Putin resolving this? I mean at the moment they're not because they're not talking to one another.

**Ball:** I mean isn't it up to Ukraine to resolve it? Not up to America. I mean this is the issue with this frame of the world. It's great power politics. Don't we believe in the right people to self-determination?

**Waters:** Yes. But the people of the Ukraine elected Zelenskyy as their new president and hopefully their new government in 2019, on the platform that he was going to end the Civil War, as they called it then, in the Donbas, implement the Minsk II agreements, and it's make peace with the Russian and Federation by saying that they would not join NATO. That is the platform he stood on and he got-

**Ball:** I think the Ukrainian public position on that probably moved somewhat when Russia moved 200,000 troops into-

**Waters:** Well, they didn't do it. They didn't do it. That was three years ago. That's three years ago. Somebody held a gun to Zelenskyy's head and said, "You're not doing that. We don't want you to do that." Or why did he change his mind? Why did policy change?

**Ball:** I don't think anyone forces someone to send in 200,000 troops and heavy armor.

**Waters:** I'm not saying that, Ball. I'm not an idiot. I'm not saying anyone forced Putin. I was surprised when they invaded. But I was also interested in the language that they used, the special military

operation. And also point B was that they wanted to de-Nazify. Well that's different because there weren't many Nazi in the Donbas, but there's a lot in the government in Kyiv. So those two things are somewhat self-contradictory, I think. Though I do understand the concern after the Maidan coup over the fact that the Russians believe that Ukraine is ruled by Nazis. And they may be right or not.

This is why the whole thing of everybody pouring so much energy into propaganda makes it so difficult for people like you and me, who care about the truth, to delve into it and turn the stones over and try and find out what the truth is. I would love to know what the truth is about Russian's raping babies or not and all of that. And the graves that they've found in the -

**Ball:** The ICC and the UN do have war crime investigators there. We're not just relying on media or relying on Ukrainian government reports, which obviously are going to be unreliable. It's war time. There are independent bodies there that are finding early evidence of this and are launching full scale investigations. We've got to believe in something, haven't we?

**Waters:** Yes, we have. But the problem is, Ball, is that when we send people in to do these jobs, if they come up with inconvenient truths, they are rejected. Look at the invasion of Iraq in 2003. I know you'll go, "Oh yeah, well." Yeah, of course they lied about weapons of mass destruction, openly in the United Nations. Colin Powell on the floor of the General Assembly making his speech. "We have intelligence. We know that Saddam Hussein could bomb..." Tony Blair was telling us, "Saddam Hussein" could bomb Cypress or something in 45 minutes with a nuclear weapon." I mean, we can grin about it, but a million Iraqis died, and Hans Blix was one of the major... They went and they said, there aren't any weapons of mass destruction. And they told them all and they went, "We're not interested."

**Ball:** Yeah. Although he was allowed to say that it was there, the UN didn't endorse the invasion. Most of the USA's allies didn't endorse the invasion. That the UN then could say or its investigators could say we can't see this.

**Waters:** Yeah, we could speak for our-

**Ball:** They're saying we can.

**Waters:** Yeah, we could speak for ours now, about wouldn't it be nice if the United Nations was a different animal and if there wasn't the thing of the five permanent members of the security council all having a veto. So that it doesn't matter if it's only the United States and Israel that votes against something. That's enough. Or in fact only the United States can veto any resolution.

**Ball:** I'm going to say Israel's not a permanent member.

**Waters:** No it's not.

**Ball:** So just before we sort of move on from Ukraine, because funnily enough, I wanted to ask you about Iraq just next. So, each time we've talked about it, you've sort of specifically said "the Ukraine." Is that deliberate or is that sort of habit, as it's quite a meaningful thing to Ukrainians at the moment?

**Waters:** No, it's ignorance on my part. I'd like you to explain it to me because I do like to know things.

**Ball:** So this wasn't something I was super aware of until a couple of years ago, but "the Ukraine" implies that Ukraine is part of Russia and it's a region. Whereas saying Ukraine without the "the" gives it its independence as a country.

**Waters:** Thank you for that. Funny enough, in my writings recently, I've stopped calling it "the Ukraine." So maybe I intuited some of that or maybe somebody else has told me.

**Ball:** Well that's why I wanted to ask that, because otherwise people will impute something into it that's not there.

**Waters:** Well thank you. I appreciate that.

**Ball:** No worries. So, I immediately recognized one of the videos that you showed during the performance, because it was from my old stomping grounds of WikiLeaks and it was the collateral murder video. I think genuinely one of the most shocking clips I've seen, it's horrendous. People would probably say it's an unusual thing to have as part of a gig that you go to have a good time. Why did it need to be part of the show?

**Waters:** Well, it's been part of my show since 2010. It happened on July the 12th, 2007 and it appeared three years later in September or October 2010, just before I started my wall shows. So I put a very similar clip to that, except the clip I used then shows them actually being machine gunned. Thousands of us have published this stuff now. So we've all committed the same crime that Julian Assange has. There's one where they're collecting, actually, the wounded... One of the cameramen was wounded-

**Ball:** And they fire again, don't they?

**Waters:** And they keep asking permission to open fire on that van, which had two kids in it who were both wounded in the attack. And obviously the guy was killed and the guy's trying to rescue him were killed and blah, blah, blah, blah. So that has been a part of every show I've done since October 2010. Why did I keep it in this? Because it hasn't gone away. No. They've never accepted culpability. Nothing has happened to the killers or anyone in the chain of command.

And it is central to the Assange case. That video, more than anything else, is why the CIA were making plans to assassinate Julian Assange. Why they were spying on him in the Ecuadorian Embassy. Why they made up all the stories about the women in Sweden and all the stories about him rubbing cat feces all over the Ecuadorian, why he is being locked up in Belmarsh, although he served the sentence that he was committed for, which was a minor bail infringement, which was for 300 days or something years ago now.

And he's in very bad shape physically and whatever. So Julian Assange is a big part of any conversation about us and them and whether we care about the law or not. Clearly, the United States government and the UK government, neither of them care about the law at all. Otherwise, they wouldn't have produced these kangaroo courts and this charade of a pretense that there's some kind of judicial process going on with Julian.

**Ball:** I worked with Wikileaks for about four or five months during these releases, during the Manning releases. Assange has nothing good to say about me. There's a bit of that mutually. But I do think all of Manning's leaks were hugely in the public interest and hugely significant. But I was in Ellingham Hall with

Assange, I was there for a lot of the Swedish case, and while the US extradition I think is appalling, and I said so publicly in all sorts of places, and in fact I was published saying it in a previous life, by the editor of *Rolling Stone*, I also don't think the Swedish case was a fit up.

And I worry that we let the importance of people as Assange and their work and the human rights causes that are attached to it, make it almost as if the man's too important to face accountability like mere mortals.

**Waters:** How good is your Swedish?

**Ball:** It's not very good.

**Waters:** Not as good as Mills Melzer probably. Have you read the trials of Julian Assange? He says, "without evidence at all." And he's looked at everything that there is. He's read all the police files and from Sweden, I'm only reiterating what Nils has said. I mean I know Nils Melzer a bit now because I've got to know him.

**Ball:** So I was literally in the room when Assange was having bits of the evidence translated for him. This is sort of not second- and third-hand stuff for me. And he was going, "Oh yeah, that happened. That happened. But no, that wasn't rape," kind of thing. These are not CIA plants, these are women who had their life ruined. And let me say, this for me-

**Waters:** Not by Julian Assange.

**Ball:** Yes, by Julian Assange.

**Waters:** How were their lives ruined?

**Ball:** Well, firstly, I think there was certainly a credible case to answer as to whether his actions constituted sexual assault or not.

**Waters:** That was about whether a condom broke. That's the only thing that there is in a story.

**Ball:** One of them was about whether a condom was ripped. The other was about whether sex was engaged when someone was asleep. But he did then also give an interview on the *Today* program where he says, "I'm not saying that they're CIA stooges, but I'm not *not* saying that either." Which immediately led to all of the Wikileaks fans, doxing them, tracking them down, threatening them.

**Waters:** I've never heard the story. And certainly it's not in any of Nils Melzer's accounts that he-

**Ball:** No, it's not because-

**Waters:** Because, he pays attention to the documents, and to all the interviews that he did with all of the people and what he got and what he couldn't get out of people. But anyway, let's not you and I argue about. Because, even what you are saying to me now. So is this a reason that he's locked up in Belmarsh?

**Ball:** No, it's not the reason he's locked up in Belmarsh.



**Waters:** Why didn't they go and interview him? They refuse to speak to him. They refused absolutely to speak to him.

**Ball:** I guess, look, we'll move on from this in a second, but I guess it's because usually if you are police or authorities or a judicial thing, you don't come at someone's beck and call like a hotel concierge. Usually you have to go in and do what they say, don't you?

**Waters:** Hey, but Assange did make the point when he said, "I don't want to come to Sweden because I'm worried that you will extradite me... to the United States. And if you do, they will kill me." And he was right about that. And there was definitely connivance between the authorities in Sweden and politicians in Sweden and the Swedish foreign office and the Swedish police with the Americans.

**Ball:** I suspect you're right there. What worries me, and the only reason I raised it is I think we can have a habit of excusing real failings of people because of their political importance or their significance to a cause that we believe in. I worry people do that with Assange, and end up almost suggesting that things like rape or sexual assault aren't important.

**Waters:** This guy's life is at stake. I hope you are also worried about the fact that when the powers that be decide to do a huge smear job and all the mainstream media get together to do a smear job on somebody to reduce the possibility of the public having sympathy for his predicament and being able to look at the thing squarely and go, "Well, hang on a minute. What's the evidence of broken condom?" And that he might have fiddled with some woman when she was asleep and we're killing him. What the fuck is that about? It's crazy. And yet that is the basis upon which the suppression of sympathy for his case has taken place and it's taken place on a huge scale. And still the mainstream media, where I live in the United States, refused to cover it at all. It's not a word about it anywhere, it's just like it's a non-story. "Oh, he's that rapist, they're going to kill him. Fuck him."

**Ball:** Sure, let us move on from Assange, back to the topic of the collateral murder video. And one thing that struck me with it is there's a half hour version as well as the edited clip. And if you watch it, there's an airstrike that you see on a building that contained... I think actually did contain militants. But what struck me even more in some ways than the gunning was that there was someone just walking past the building as they launched the missile, and 20 seconds more, they'd have been past the building and they're not.

The missile goes as they're just outside it, and I assume they're killed. It doesn't look survivable. And from that, I always think anytime I see an airstrike who was walking by who was near, do you think it's sort of possible to use air power judiciously, et cetera? Or do you think that an air strike is an air strike, and there's just no way to do it well?

**Waters:** I honestly don't know the answer to that question. There is a story from my childhood that I could bring up, which might go against the grain of me saying, "No, drone strikes particularly are wrong. It's murder. It's extrajudicial murder." And should the UK or any country, France, United States of America give itself license to go anywhere in the world and kill people because it thinks it's a good idea? No, they shouldn't. That should be absolutely banned for both. You can't do it. Because it presupposes A, that you know you're right about something. And B, that because you are powerful and strong, like United States is at the moment, you have a right to go and kill anyone you want. Whether it's our Alwaki or whether it's al-Zawahiri or whoever. The guy they just killed recently standing on his balcony. It's still murder. That is murder. Okay. No.

But having said that, I'll tell you the story because my mom told me this story. She had a friend called Maria who lived all through the Second World War. My mother was in London, the Second World War. Maria was part of the resistance in Holland. And she was passing messages to England. And I don't know the chain of command or how it happened, but the story is that she gave them the address of the Gestapo headquarters in the Hague or wherever it was, or Amsterdam or whatever. And what are those little twin engines, a Mosquito? They were called Mosquito bombers. And that the RAF sent in them and they did what we call now, a surgical attack on Gestapo headquarters in this particular building, in this particular... And without killing any instant Dutch people, they destroyed all the Gestapo records with a couple of... I have no idea whether this is true or apocryphal. But, as a small child, I remember thinking how heroic of the pilots and how clever of Maria and how clever of MI5, blah blah blah.

So it just shows that in the mind of an eight-year-old or whatever, you can make a case for that being okay. And, of course, I grew up with tons and tons of war movies. So there's lots of things about, it's like, not the Dambusters particularly, but all those heavy water plants in Norway. Heroes of Telemark, and all that stuff. So we were all brought up as well thinking that the bombing raids were okay. And it wasn't till we read *Slaughterhouse Five* or whatever, started to think about and started to think about what happens after a war. Who gets to try the criminals? What was the war crime and what was it? What is it all right to kill a hundred thousand people in Dresden ... And the fire bombing of Tokyo and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and all the other German cities that were fire bombed, and all hundreds of thousands of innocent people suffocating.

Because the whole theory of it was you suck all the oxygen out and everybody dies. So your brain gets a bit confused when you get a bit older and you think about all that. I don't know.

**Ball:** There's the clear yeses and the clear no. But I think that there is this sort of horrifying sort of gray zone. So, take Syria when ISIS was still a very major threat there and looking like it could take over at the state. In 2017 to its own stats, the US made 11,235 air strikes there. And that sort of seems fairly staggeringly higher as a number. But then I dug out the stats for Russia, and Russia's stats say it made 71,000 strikes there.

**Waters:** Well there's a slight difference, in that they were there at the invitation of the Syrian government.

**Ball:**

Do we think that the Syrian government is a legitimate one?

**Waters:** Well, in the absence of any evidence that says otherwise, yeah we do. They still have elections.

**Ball:** Yes, but their last election had no opposition parties, no ballot in opposition or rebellion control areas. 95.1% vote for Assad. Does that sound like a free and fair election?

**Waters:** No. Absolutely not. It's the only evidence that there is though, I have to say. And by it not have been a good idea to let the Syrians get on with it and figure out how, if they want to have a fair election. I mean there's no fair elections in the United States because it's all bought and paid for because of [Citizens United](#).

**Ball:** Well, I mean the Syrians were trying to do this out. They had a peaceful Arab Spring style but uprising where they tried to push for a bit more freedom, a bit more—

**Waters:** 2011 to 2013. I know. I have read the history.

**Ball:** A friend of mine who lives here now was beaten and tortured, he was electrocuted in Assad's cells.

**Waters:** Really?

**Ball:** And most of the opposition in Syria is nothing like ISIS. It's driven by secular people who want freedom. And Assad and Russia have bombed them into oblivion and tortured them and forced them out of the country. Is that not a greater horror than Vladimir Putin-

**Waters:** Well, what would you suggest, invade Syria and completely destroy the whole country? Are you suggesting a regime change, boots on the ground invasion of Syria, get rid of Assad and up impose whoever your guy is and it'll all be all right? It doesn't work. We've seen those attempts again and again and again, particularly in the last 50 or 60 years since I've been paying attention. And while we're talking about bombing, I've just been reading in VJ and Noam Chomsky's book here about Laos. And however many times you read the numbers, you talk about the 71,000 missions, when you read the numbers of the bombing of Laos back in 1969 and '70 and '71, it's just beyond all imagination how much ordinance was dropped, way more than was dropped during the whole of the Second World War on everybody, was dropped on Laos, on that neighboring country to Vietnam. I mean-

**Ball:** Yes, we have. I will pull back to Syria at some point, but I just want to sort of move a little around to ... you display quite a few names of people who've been killed by authorities, sort of mostly the US and the UK. And some of those I think would be very familiar to the people in the crowd, Brianna Taylor and George Floyd, but I think some of them probably most people won't have heard of. I think I saw Colin Roach, Rasaad Charles, Blair Peach. What made you choose who to flag up and why?

**Waters:** Well, working with an almost entirely American crew as I have ... there tends to be a natural tendency for it to all be very USA-centric. And so I have been at great pains to say, "No, we can't do that. We need footage from Turkey and from wherever. It doesn't matter, Russia, anywhere, and we need names from other places as well." So that's imposed by me and it is an attempt to make it a bit more global. And so, although some of them, like Rachel Cori, well she's American but she was killed in Gaza and Shireen Abu Akleh, obviously a recent thing who was killed in the occupied territories.

So I don't know, I try and stay up to date a little bit and I try to include people from all over and it may be that some of those things I would be happy to get rid of, except everybody's brother or mother or sister. So all the victims of political ultra-violence situations or just battling with the police, which happens whether we like it or not. In the UK if you look at the history of for instance, West Indians in London and all of that, shit happens, people get killed, and it has to do with racism as well as the inequality of our financial circumstances and all the rest of it. So I don't know what to say. Is it more important than Grenfell? No, of course it isn't, these individual cases of police brutality or whatever, but can we forget any of them? No, we can't there. They're our brothers and sisters, every one of them.

**Ball:** Obviously police and inquests, and others have had a lot to say on several of these. Some have been found to be wrongful death and no one's been punished. Some have led to jail time for some of the police, although a lot shorter than someone else would get. But others have kind of said, 'We've done a

full investigation, this is an accidental death. Someone accidentally swallowed a package or that kind of thing'. Do you accept or reject those kind of official rulings?

**Waters:** Well, I wouldn't like to give any blanket, except am I capable of making mistakes? Of course, I am. Have I got some of it wrong? Probably. I can't go through all the judicial inquiries of all the stories that get brought to me about things, but I'm quite prepared to accept that I could be wrong about stuff.

**Ball:** Oh, don't worry, I don't have a gotcha in my back pocket here.

**Waters:** Right.

**Ball:** It's-

**Waters:** If you did, it wouldn't matter. I would say thanks. Thank you for bringing me up to date or showing me the error of my ways or what. I'm always prepared to be wrong about everything because to be certain, except for a very few things. I was writing a letter today about Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi, who's a friend of mine and who... Have you seen the news today?

**Ball:** No.

**Waters:** Well, they have chucked her out of the Labour party now. They've said she cannot attend the first NEC meeting, which is next week or whatever, because she's contravened some Labour party rule. Everybody said, "How long is it going to take them after she was elected for the NEC throw her out?" It's taken about 10 days, which is pretty amazing. Why did I bring that up? Oh, I wrote a letter about it. In this letter, and I'll say this to you because I talk about my mother, and you may not have heard this story, so I'll tell you. When I was 13 years old, I was having a problem thinking about something that was going on in my life and my mother could see me wrestling mentally and she went, "What's up?" And I went, "I'm thinking about this thought," I told her.

She said, "You know what? Yeah, I can understand that must be difficult." She said, "All through your life you're going to come up against difficult problems, different things to think about that may not all be easy. When you do, if you'll take my advice," and she said, "You'll do this. Read, read, read, read. Find out everything that you possibly can about whatever it might be. It may take you some time. Try and look at it from both sides or from all sides at many passages of things. When you've done that, you've done all the heavy lifting, your work is done. The next bit is really easy."

And so I went, "What's the next bit, mum?" And she said, "You just do the right thing." And it's not that complicated. So long as you have some kind of a moral compass. And you can only have a moral compass if you care about your brothers and sisters, all of them. You can't cherry pick human rights and you can't decide there's one rule for some people and another for ... This is what our leaders do, is they decide "There's one rule for us and another rule for them because we are good and they're evil, and we'll do as we fucking well like. And if we have to kill them all, we have to kill them all, but it's all right because we are in the right." And this is kind of how international politics when it comes to invading people and killing them, I suppose, as you know.

**Ball:** So on that principle, sort of why I came at this by some of the people who'd sort been killed by authority and where authority tries to hide that or argue with it, it felt to me there was a sense that

when there are clashing narratives as you research, etc., as a first principle, believe the less powerful, the less privileged group. Would that be fair?

**Waters:** Partially, I suppose. But mainly that is because the oppressor normally has a closer grip on the narrative so they can write the narrative. But at a certain point, sometimes things become much more graphic and clearer and the narrative starts to slip from their grasp. Again, like I would say Israel and Palestine now. But even when it does, it's still very difficult for the oppressed to get out from under the heel of the jack boot because how did they do it? If you are occupied and there are soldiers everywhere with M-15s, it's very difficult to say, "Hang on a minute, I think we've clearly shown that we're being oppressed. We were sort of living here and then you came along and tried to throw us all out and now you're killing us all."

But we have no recourse to the law, which is a line from one of my songs. In "The Gunner's Dream," it's part of the gunner's dream, "A place to stay, enough to eat. Somewhere over here I shuffle safely down the street. Where you can speak out loud about your doubts and fears and no one ever disappears. You never hear their standard issue kicking in the door. Everyone has recourse to the law." Well that's me going back to my obsession with Paris 1948. That's basically the declaration of human rights, enough to eat, a place to stay, blah, blah, blah. That's what it is. Well, Palestinians don't have that. They don't have any of it. They don't even have the right to life with recourse. So recourse to the law in my book is hugely important. That's why Julian is so important, because he does not have recourse to the law. They've decided to kill him and they will.

**Ball:** It's just sort of a stance that you've had that really seems to jar with me from what you've just said and what you say elsewhere, which is it's again in Syria, and it's the chemical attacks that took place there.

**Waters:** It didn't take place there. If you're talking about Duma on April the 7th, 2018-

**Ball:** Yes.

**Waters:** There was no chemical attack. We know that for absolute sure. Both the main inspectors for the OPCW have come out, Ian Henderson and Inspector B, and said, "There was no chemical attack." And they've been fired from the OPCW for that fact and the report was written by people who were sitting in Istanbul.

**Ball:** Let me stress, there wasn't only one chemical attack. There have been multiple other ones. Letters argue a lot about Duma, although it's two staff among a larger team.

**Waters:** Are you talking about Duma?

**Ball:** No, there-

**Waters:** Have you thought about Ghouta as well and-

**Ball:** Yes.

**Waters:** ... Shaykhun? Well, I know all about those in texts as well. And you can take a pick on what you choose to believe about those things. But Duma is cut and dried, and they actually had a meeting of the security council two years ago, less than two years ago. All right? Because a friend of mine, Aaron Maté gave evidence to it. And the guy who formed the OPCW in the first place, who was the first leader, director of the OPCW, wanted to give evidence and they wouldn't let him speak.

**Ball:** But he didn't have specific examples-

**Waters:** Have you watched that whole debate in the security council, because I did?

**Ball:** So I've followed quite a lot on this issue. Look, we can talk about Duma or not, but-

**Waters:** Well, I wish you would.

**Ball:** Essentially the issue here becomes you have what I think is a clear example of imperial power, sort of Syria backed by Russia, and you have relatively small rebel groups that are getting minimal US support, because the US and the UK basically decided not to care about Syria. And in that context, I don't understand why we don't believe the victims rather than believe the imperial power. There is not any prospect of a real invasion of Syria or a regime change there. That's not what anyone's pushing for. So why are we believing-

**Waters:** Not anymore.

**Ball:** ... Assad and Russia over the people who are being bombed and the people who are facing chemical attacks? Why are we believing that they're killing people on their own side, their own children in chemical attacks or to stage chemical attacks?

**Waters:** Well, why don't you answer that question for yourself? You know the answer just as well as I do. The information that comes out of a war, the first casualty of war is the truth. We all know that. So you can cherry pick whatever you want to believe about Ghouta or about Duma, about Shaykhun, or about Idlib, or any of the stories or about the White Helmets or about the Russians or about the Americans or about ISIS. You choose. Take your pick, you choose whatever narrative you want. I do not know all the detail of all of this. I don't. I don't know it. I know quite a lot about the White Helmets because I've made it my business to study Ball and to study the start of it and where it came from and where all the money came from and who funded it and where it was based. And it wasn't based in Syria, it had nothing to do with Syria. It was all based in Turkey.

And you can look that up and you can go through it as well with a tooth comb. Or I could go with you and we could go round to your mate who was tortured by Assad and have tea with him and he could show me his scars and whatever, and I might learn something, or we might both.

But it very much depends upon who you are and where you are and what you choose to believe. Because I could be wrong about Duma, but none of the evidence points to me being wrong about Duma. It all points to me being right about Duma, and yet the contrary to what I believe is believed by the vast number of people in the western sphere because it is the narrative that is told by our newspapers and our journalists, and our writers of news tell an opposite view to the one that I hold. And they may be right.

**Ball:** Do we not risk with this sort of "And they may be right" or "That's the evidence you've seen. That's the people you've spoken to?" Do we not end up in a fairly nihilistic place where rather than someone, anyone controlling the narrative, we're sort of all just picking up and choosing our own version?

**Waters:** No, we don't because-

**Ball:** We're all choosing our own facts.

**Waters:** No, we all live with who we are and how much we care about people and how much love we have in our hearts. And if we care about people and have love in our hearts, we want to know the truth. So the reason I keep coming back to Duma is because I've spent a great deal of time studying it and I believe that I know the truth of what happened in Duma. So I can live with myself and go to sleep at night knowing that the story that is being sold by the Western media is propaganda and it is not the truth. I know the truth. And I'm sure I'm right about that. The rest of it, your mate who was tortured, I'm sure you are right. I'm not sure you are right, but I would be prepared to believe you on the evidence of kind of probability. But it's sort of a guess on my back. It's not a guess on his part if he was there.

**Ball:** No, I understand you're saying you'll take it on trust, but I just-

**Waters:** Well, I would if I knew him and-

**Ball:** Yes. I just find it quite difficult because you're clearly someone who can be extremely compassionate. I was reading a couple of days ago about you working with Clive Stafford Smith, excellent guy, and helping get/sort two children who'd been sort of brought against their will into Syria out again. But to me, it sort of seems quite cold when there are dead civilians and chemical attacks that are as confirmed as can be confirmed, not to have a starting position of you know what you need? Absolutely extraordinary evidence.

**Waters:** It's not confirmed. They're ideas by and large. What would it profit Assad to have carried out those chemical... It's the worst possible thing he could ever have done, if it's stupid enough to do it. That's why one looks into it to go, does this seem likely? No, it doesn't.

**Ball:** Well, does it though?

**Waters:** Does it pay? There's-

**Ball:** There's nothing in it for faking them. There's no help coming for those people.

**Waters:** Well, there's help coming from the opposition, ISIS or Al Jazeera, or not Al Jazeera, but-

**Ball:** It's hard because-

**Waters:** They nearly always happen when they're just leaving somewhere, and then this chemical attack happens and the next day they leave, but they blame Assad for the attack. So it does a huge amount of good for them, for ISIS, for those people, and it does a huge amount of harm politically and in terms of global public opinion to Assad if people believe that regime did that, but it doesn't make any sense at all,

it's completely counterintuitive to think that Assad would do that for no gain for him, nothing. Huge negative, no gain, unless he's just a weird-

**Ball:** Well, it terrorizes his opposition and breaks the spirit to resist, does it not?

**Waters:** No.

**Ball:** And it's clearly been demonstrated there's no consequences to him for years now.

**Waters:** They were moving out. They moved out the next day. There was no spirit to resist. They're gone. They left the next day, they left on the 8th. "Oh, I know, I'll break their spirit by suddenly having a chemical attack. And then I've already hired the buses that are going to take ISIS away –

**Ball:** But look, we're going to get nowhere. So-

**Waters:** The 7th of April, I know the dates, I've studied it.

**Ball:** We're going to get nowhere here. So let's sort of move-

**Waters:** Well, isn't that a shame? Why can't you just go, "Yeah, you're probably right. You obviously know more about it than I do?" Because I do know more about it than you do.

**Ball:** Because-

**Waters:** Why don't you do the reading? [inaudible].

**Ball:** If it's on Duma, and look, there's no way that us having a long back and forth about the detail would make it into the feature because it would be completely incomprehensible to anyone reading it, wouldn't it? My-

**Waters:** I told you that I went to Syria and saw Mahmud and Ayyub, which is the names of the two boys from Trinidad and Tobago that we went with?

**Ball:** Yeah. Well, but this is why some of these things strike me. I think it's easy for people to believe if you say this attack didn't happen, or X didn't happen, or Ukraine should... I know people of the left who would go "Actually, Roger Waters doesn't actually care about human rights, doesn't care about people. People are dying in Ukraine. People are getting murdered by Assad. This isn't someone with compassion." I think you are someone with compassion. But I think the mistrust at Western media has almost over-spilled into only trusting the evidence of your own eyes or your own network. And I wonder if that becomes a bit of a tragedy, or a bit of a shame?

**Waters:** Well, I don't know. Obviously, I relied, to quite a large extent, on websites for my information, people who I trust because they really do a lot of research, and they do a lot of not just reading but a lot of investigation into the stories that they attach themselves to, and they print it all. They don't hide anything, and none of it ever says "from a reliable intelligence source," which is where most of the news comes from now, which means the Pentagon or the CIA or MI6 or whatever, but it's intelligence sources.



When I read intelligence source, I go, "No," because we only have to look at our past history to know that is. That's why we invaded Iraq was intelligence sources told us that Saddam Hussein was a crazed criminal who was going to destroy us all with weapons, and it was all bullshit, complete bullshit.

**Ball:** So for what it's worth, I worked on the Edward Snowden leaks for the Guardian, so I'm not someone who gets all that much from intelligence sources after that. But we've been talking intermittently about Israel and Palestine, but we haven't sort of specifically talked about it, other than to briefly talk about the absolutely appalling killing of Shireen.

Obviously, there's contention to this issue for you. Am I right to say that you would describe yourself as very critical of the government of Israel but not as Antisemitic?

**Waters:** Yeah. Well, I'm absolutely not antisemitic, absolutely not. This was actually agreed about 15 years ago by the ADL who had a good look at me, and they said, "No, he's not Antisemitic." That hasn't stopped all the assholes trying to smear me with being an Antisemite ever since.

**Ball:** I was going to say the ADL, I don't think they have that view now. They do have a "Roger Waters In His Own Words" page, don't they?

**Waters:** I don't know. I promise you I don't waste my time reading the ADL. And it's not just the appalling death of Shireen Abu Akleh. They're all appalling deaths.

**Ball:** Of course.

**Waters:** Every Palestinian shot to death by the IDF is appalling. She just happened to be very well known and very well loved, and she was a journalist and wearing a press and whatever. But nothing will happen to the murderer, as we know. It'll be swept under the carpet anyways.

**Ball:** Look, I think a lot of people will have a hell of a lot of criticism for the Israeli state and Gaza and the West Bank and the various settlements, et cetera. Where do you think the bar lies?

Where is the gap between being very critical of Israel and being antisemitic? Where do you think it is, not necessarily where do you think-

**Waters:** Nowhere near the IHRA definition, which, what's his name, George Steven, George somebody or other, who wrote it, who's come out again and again and said, "I hate the fact that this new definition that I wrote, hoping to help things a bit, has been completely misinterpreted," and it's been accepted by all kinds of organizations.

I tell you what really got me was when I read that Cambridge University had accepted the IHRA definition. I thought, "Oh my goodness."

It's not my alma major. I didn't go to Cambridge University, but I'm a townie.

I was brought up in Cambridge. So I feel a certain kind of affinity for the town and even something of an affection for Newton and a few of the other old colleges of the university.

**Ball:** What is it about the IHRA that you sort of so dislike?

**Waters:** Well, that it says that criticism of Israel is Antisemitic. It's simple.

**Ball:** I mean, people argue that it doesn't say that, and what does-

**Waters:** It does. I've read all those examples. If I could I get it, pull it up-

**Ball:** Isn't the argument that it doesn't say criticism of Israel is Antisemitic; it says criticizing the right of Israel to exist is Antisemitic? And aren't those quite different?

**Waters:** Well, no. Well, the right of Israel to exist as an apartheid state, I'm complaining about that. Saying Israel does not have a right to exist as an apartheid state, any more than South Africa did or anywhere else would, is not Antisemitic. It's protesting part of the workings of a state that you disapprove of. That's all. But it's not disapproving of the people who live there or the Jewish faith, for instance, or people because they're Jewish. It's disapproving of the fact that they are a supremacist, settler colonialist project that operates a system of apartheid. That's what we're criticizing.

**Ball:** I mean, 'settler' is complex there, isn't it? I mean—

**Waters:** There are 700,000 settlers. That's what they're called.

**Ball:** The West Bank was Judea before it was Samaria, centuries before-

**Waters:** All that rubbish about—

**Ball:** Jewish people have lived there forever.

**Waters:** No longer than Arab people have, and they were in much smaller numbers than the Arab people.

**Ball:** But isn't-

**Waters:** They were only 10 percent of the population back in the Twenties.

**Ball:** Yes, but isn't settler quite offensive when there are Jewish people who have lived there for two millennia?

**Waters:** No, it's not. Those people are not from there. They are not the descendants of indigenous people who've ever lived there. They're all from northern Europe or America or somewhere else.

So they're people of the Jewish faith from other places who've come to Israel and then gone over the border into country that is not Israel, contravening the Geneva conventions and the UN charter, and settled the land in absolute contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention and all international law. They are settlers and occupiers of the land.

It is not theirs. They have no right to it historically, whatever is written in the Old Testament or the New Testament of the Bible, which let's not forget, it has... Well, anyway, let's not go into the Bible.

**Ball:** We can go the Bible if you want, but I'm no theologian, so it's not going to help at all.

**Waters:** Bible study was not high on my list of things to do on Sunday afternoons. Cricket, yes, maybe soccer in the winter, maybe even rugby when I went to a grammar school, but reading the Bible, no.

**Ball:** So just to sort of clear up a couple of things, do you think Israel has a right to exist if it finds a two-state solution or some negotiated way so that it's no longer what you called it an apartheid state?

**Waters:** Yeah.

**Ball:** And do you think Jewish people in, say, the US or the UK bear responsibility for the actions of Israel?

**Waters:** Yeah.

**Ball:** So-

**Waters:** Particularly because they pay for everything.

**Ball:** Is that not the same as saying that sort of Iranians or people of Iranian descent and Muslim faith bear responsibility for the acts of Iran?

**Waters:** No, Iran, the state of Iran bears responsibility, Persia.

**Ball:** So why is Israel different then?

**Waters:** Well, it's not.

**Ball:** But you said Jewish people in the US or the UK sort of bear responsibility for its actions. Is that not the same?

**Waters:** Only the ones who are politically or financially or materially supporting the apartheid project that is the state of Israel.

**Ball:** So it's not by virtue of being Jewish; it's Jewish people who support the government of Israel.

**Waters:** Listen, whenever I make my little speech, which I do several times a day every day, about how you can't cherry pick human rights and how I care about all my brothers and sisters all over the world, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, or nationality, I'm telling the truth. That is my truth. Your ethnicity and your religion and your nationality have nothing to do with my belief that you should have equal human rights with all your brothers and sisters all over the world. Obviously, we don't all have equal rights, but that is an ideal to which I subscribe.

That is why I think the Palestinian people should have equal rights with Israeli people and that Muslim and Christian and Druze people should have equal rights with Jewish people, because I believe equal rights should extend irrespective of... And I can't keep repeating it. It's really simple.

**Ball:** So just sort of one last bit on this particular thing, and I'm sure we probably need to start wrapping now. You've been generous with your time. But one phrase I know you've used that causes a lot of alarm is "from the river to the sea." And are you aware it's used as a shorthand for either the annihilation of Israel or to suggest Jewish people have no claim to any of the land on which Israel sits?

**Waters:** It's funny, Marc Lamont Hill was fired from his job at the university that he worked at for using those six words within the context of a much longer conversation about the situation, Israel, Palestine and all of that. No, bollocks.

It's just a geographical description of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. It has no connotation for me apart from that. I suspect that the only solution that we're going to find to it is a single state where everybody is a citizen, and everybody has equal political rights. The two-state solution is gone. And if you can't see that, you're blind, and everybody with half a brain agrees that there is no two-state solution. Two-state solution was a great thing to waste time, waste another 40 years, waste another 30 years, whatever, and just sit here and allow the-

**Ball:** I mean, it was, of course, supposed to be two states back in 1948, and it was a pretty dark combination of events, which you can... It is rare I use this sentence. I have some sympathy for the sort of authorities at the time there because you had Jordan invade what's now the West Bank. You had Egypt take Gaza; and Israel, because it did shockingly well, militarily versus what people expected, ended up seizing about the remaining 50 percent of land that was supposed to join up and make the Palestinian state, but of course, given the sort of horrors of the Holocaust followed by the traumatic, incredibly traumatic, birth of Jewish Israel, I can sympathize with why a one-state solution in which Jewish people could quickly be a minority when they're already very much a minority in the wider region, why that worries them so. Can you not sympathize with that?

**Waters:** Well, I can understand it, but their way of going about not letting that happen is criminally insane, and we can all see it from here. Unfortunately, in the United States of America, you have a government entrenched in the idea that the state of Israel can do no harm and that they will go on giving them weapons forever, and they will go on, if you're Trump, moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to whatever.

Liz Truss is now talking about moving the British Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Oh, brilliant, Liz. Of course, I can see that they might have concerns, but this cannot go on forever. They are trying to force the Palestinians into another intifada. Gideon Levy wrote a piece about it in Haaretz this morning, just this morning, and he's praying that they don't manage it, but they will because they're murdering so many Palestinians every day now that the time will come when there will be another armed uprising, which will be terrible, particularly for the Palestinians because the Israelis are armed to the teeth and will murder them.

They murder them anyway. They call it mowing the lawn. They do it constantly, so I can understand their disquiet. I've been to Israel. I have witnessed the shutters coming down if you say anything that upsets their sense of ownership of everything at all, so I do understand what a problem it is. So who knows? Will there ever be a unified state? Yeah, there will. Will Israelis be a majority? Probably not. Will they have to get on with it?

Nobody's suggesting that they all have to leave, which is what they suggested to the indigenous people there in 1948. And obviously, this all goes back to Mr. Sykes and Mr. Picot at the end of the First World War and, before that, to the Balfour Declaration, which everybody forgets the second sentence of is, "Save that it do not infringe on the religious or political rights of any of the indigenous people."

That's what His Majesty's government supported: Support the creation of a Jewish state or a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, save that it do not blah, blah, blah.

And Mr. Sykes and Mr. Picot and the governments of France and the United Kingdom divided up the whole of the Middle East after they defeated the Germans and the Ottoman Empire in the first World War, completely arbitrarily, just with a big pencil, creating Iraq and creating Syria and creating these divisions. "You have that bit. We'll have this bit, and you can have, what's it called? Syria. French, you can have the Lebanon. We'll take this and this."

Talk about imperialism. That's the winners. Winners in world wars get to draw lines on maps.

**Ball:** I mean, they do. Just to try and not end us on a completely gloomy note, what gives you hope when you look at the world?

**Waters:** When I look at the world, well, funny enough, it's doing these shows. When I'm in the room, and everybody in the room, 16,000 people, all appear to be agreeing with me that we can sit in the bar and talk, that gives me some hope.

That is a beautiful thing to feel, and it's a visceral thing every night that we're in a room with an audience. I'm not saying it's a hundred percent of the audience, but it's many, many of them having been given the permission to listen to somebody who they may disagree with.

And I don't make speeches. It's not like talking to you. Well, you've seen the show, so you-

**Ball:** I have. So I mean, we've managed not to have a bar fight, which is, I think, a good start, but I sit worried-

**Waters:** [inaudible].

**Ball:** ... with such different sets of facts and such different sets of beliefs-

**Waters:** Well, that's propaganda. Other people come to talk about the fog of conflicting propagandas and how hard it is to negotiate one's way through it, and it's really difficult. And wouldn't it be a good thing if we weren't living in a battle of conflicting propagandas?

Because we are, and it's very hard to figure anything out through it. There's one other thing I want to say.

It's a little story I tell about a French friend of mine. He's dead now. One day, we were walking through New York. It was early in the morning. He was an alcoholic, and he smoked lots of cigarettes. And we stopped on 54th Street, and we were chatting, and he had a quadruple Famous Grouse, and I had an

espresso. And he smoked lots and lots of cigarettes, and we were talking, and he picked up on something philosophical I must have said to him. And I asked him about how he felt about it, and he thought about it, and he did all this. And then he went, and he said three little things, and I wrote them down on a piece of paper. And I used to carry them with me for years and years, but I remember it.

He said, very phlegmatic like the French often are, and he said, "I was here," and he went, "I felt something." And he said, "And perhaps I was not alone." And I get emotional even when I say that now, so that's it.

"Perhaps I am not alone" is central to managing to feel okay, even if everything seems to be turning to shit.

Perhaps we are not alone.