



1 Cromwell Street
Mt Eden
Auckland

Pacific Peace Flotilla
1996

1 September 1996

Stephanie

Dear Interviewee

Please find the enclosed transcript of your recorded audiotape from the *Moruroa Pacific Peace Flotilla*. These have had a "rough" editing but you may wish to change spellings, order of sequence, etc. Please just "cross out" and write with a pen (preferably in a colour other than black).

FINAL DRAFT

We still have a paid typist available who will put these corrections on the "disk". Could you return the corrected transcript to me within one week to the above address. The corrected revision will be sent for your own records; and copies will be sent to the National Archives in Wellington and to the Maritime Museum in Auckland.

Also, may we have your permission to reproduce the transcript in any forthcoming publication?

Kind regards

Claudia,

Claudi Pond Eyley
for MORUROA PACIFIC PEACE FLOTILLA

(please cut)

Tick

- YES The interview may be considered for any forthcoming publication.
- NO The interview is not available for publication.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

STEPHANIE MILLS

Date: July 1996
Venue: Greenpeace office, Auckland

SM: My name's Stephanie Mills and I'm a campaigner for Greenpeace New Zealand but I've also worked for Greenpeace International as the nuclear testing co-ordinator and co-ordinated the Non-Proliferation Treaty project.

I guess my first memory of French testing was when I was a child and I remember there were postcards from Greenpeace with pictures of the Fri on them and you had to sign them and send them into the Prime Minister (who I think was Keith Holyoake) to ask him to stop French testing and I just remember them being on the mantelpiece in my parent's living room. But I suppose I was always interested in the peace movement and I was involved in the peace movement in the early '80s when I was at university (1981-84) and the whole nuclear-free New Zealand thing was a big issue for me.

Then when I went travelling I applied for a job at the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain so I got involved full-time in the Peace Movement there. The issues were very much British ones obviously, in terms of Trident and the nuclear weapons that were already deployed and the cruise missiles at Greenham Common and so on. But I was helping write information I managed to get bits of specific material on French testing in there and tried to keep an eye on what was going on down here and then when I came back to New Zealand in 1990 I was asked to work for Greenpeace on the French testing issue.

The first time I went to Moruroa was actually at the end of 1990; I didn't end up actually going to the atoll but we took the Rainbow Warrior to the edge of the 12 mile zone, after earlier going to Tahiti. A team of scientists who went

inside the zone were arrested and taken to Moruroa and then flown out to Tahiti. That was really the start of a lot of the second generation debate about the effect of testing at the atoll. I think you can characterise the campaign against French testing in different ways really and one of them was definitely the scientific ways. There was obviously concern about what underground testing meant at the atoll and there was a bunch of reports, the Cousteau report, the Atkinson report, in the '80s that really gave us some data but gave us also some good ammunition to try and ask for further scientific work.

That trip in 1990 was really to stimulate that debate and in 1992 we again submitted a scientific proposal to the French, because we already had in 1990, but we also went with the idea of taking a peace camp like the Greenham Peace Camp or the Antarctic World Park base idea to the atoll, of trying to create the image of going back to the original idea of the Pacific being a place of peace and the atoll is a peace base, converting if you like, a military place to a peace place. The ship was seized then, also, in 1992, going into the 12 mile zone and then released. So that was my first encounter with French commandos really.

CE: How long did they hold the boat?

SM: I'm just trying to remember. It's amazing how these things go from your mind. There's an incredible intensity when it's happening, but it's a very short period I guess. They must have held the ship for about 48 hours. What happened was that they towed her to Faungataufa and I think that was when I really realised that to put the Rainbow Warrior inside the lagoon at Moruroa was in

some ways for them a taboo, they just couldn't handle the idea of that ship that they'd bombed, that had been resurrected if you like, back in that lagoon. So they towed her to Faungataufa and they took the rest of us to Moruroa. We had a crew of about 6 or 8 people on board and they sailed her to Rarotonga afterwards but they deported the people who they thought were the worst. So we got deported actually to the United States and then got the first plane out, as it were. We then flew back to New Zealand.

CE: Did you get questioned and interrogated while you were there?

SM: It's a funny process; because you're on an atoll, thousands of miles from anywhere, you can't escape and being locked up isn't really the issue! And what they did was they took us into a series of different military huts (I supposed you'd call them) and then to the officers' mess and at one of them I thought we were going to have a stand off where they were just going to throw us into some bunker because we had a really good bunch of journalists on board and they'd taken all the kind of communication equipment (radios and cameras etc) and we refused to leave or agree to sign anything and the journalists were refusing to go until they gave us back their gear. The Admiral had left us with one of his subordinates who was getting more and more irate and he threatened to lock us all up, which I must say was a bit laughable, given that there was nowhere to really run to, but in the end he came back and he obviously saw it was more hassle for him than anything else so he gave the gear back. By the end of it, they were asking for our autographs and we had more personal relationships with the military really, not the guys that boarded us (they had a slightly different attitude) but the subordinates, I

guess they'd been conscripted, were younger guys doing their military service.

So then we were deported...

CE: What happened when you were deported, did you have armed guards with you, were you handcuffed?

SM: It was quite funny actually. I don't remember being handcuffed. There were three of us that were taken to the US. We had a Tahitian person and a French gendarme with us. The funniest thing was, when we got to LA we were basically pretty exhausted because we'd gone through 36 hours of action) the American Immigration wanted to treat us as illegal aliens and not let us past the airport and the Greenpeace people wanted us out there to talk to media and welcome us back. So Sebia Hawkins and Faith Doherty, who were both formidable, managed to persuade the Immigration to let us through which was great. But while we were waiting to be cleared through, there was a drugs person and a drug dog who came down and the French person was carrying this bag which obviously had meat in it or something because the drug dog went completely beserk and I thought that was really funny, I was killing myself laughing in front of the guy at American Immigration who couldn't really understand how we'd ended up coming to the US with two policemen in tow, but we didn't look like terrorists or legal aliens or anything (I think Martini didn't have shoes on!). I suppose also you realise how you can be pretty helpless and that being able to communicate with the rest of the

world fairly quickly is one of those safety nets ... I realised how lonely it would be otherwise.

So 1992 was really important to me because I'd had a real struggle to get the rest of the organisation to agree to send the Rainbow Warrior there again and I was sure that President Mitterand was ready to make a decision about testing.... I think he ~~was~~ was a man who saw himself as a figure in history and he had come to power in 1981, committed to stopping testing, which lasted about two days I think. I thought it was something that he might want to do and so we finally got the Warrior there and literally a week after we were there Mitterand did announce a moratorium and I thought that my days with protesting nuclear tests were possibly over.

Then I came back to New Zealand and became campaign director and started talking about toxic issues and climate changes. Then on 4 March I was asked to co-ordinate the Non-Proliferation Treaty project which was basically leading up to the Non-Proliferation Treaty talks in New York in April/May 1995. That felt like a head-on fight with the nuclear weapon States really, it was very demoralising and difficult for the non-nuclear countries because they were basically screwed, intimidated and threatened by nuclear weapon states into an extension and New Zealand was craven ... At that stage I suppose I felt that we'd done a pretty good job of making life uncomfortable for the nuclear weapons states at the conference and in the run-up to it but it just seemed like we were going backwards. China tested two days after the talks, and when Chirac was elected in the last week of the talks, it was very clear that he was going to test; that was his macho image

that he was going to make France great again and put it on the map - which of course he did, but perhaps not the results he expected.

At the end of the talks, we were really exhausted; we'd been involved for six weeks, up all night watching negotiations and lobbying people producing daily reports. I went back to Amsterdam and we had a sort of crisis meeting to decide what we could do. We knew we had to do something and the thing we all agreed on was that we wanted to try and do something to prevent the tests starting. So that was the whole thing in July... with the pressure so strong, he might change his mind. When we agreed to send the ship to Moruroa at the end of May, Chirac hadn't announced that the tests were going to occur. It was very strange because we announced that we were going to send the ship on the Sunday, there was an obvious leak from the Ministry that some of the tests were likely to start and the ship departed on the day that Chirac announced that the tests were going to resume and it felt like "ugh", but also that we were doing the right thing. I think that was why there was such a huge amount of interest around the world.

We had a wonderful trip up to Tahiti. We had a huge response in Rarotonga and a fantastic march out there...

CE: This is in July, do you remember the date?

SM: It would have been about 28th June (*sic*) I think. There were about 3000 people on the march which in Rarotonga is a good third of population and public servants had been given the afternoon off to join the march. It was very

hot and everybody was very cheerful and, at the same time, hurt about what was happening. The feeling that people had there was really strong, really genuine I think. I mean I don't include the Government necessarily. I think there was such a strong feeling that this was the ocean and these were their relatives in Tahiti who were suffering from what the French were doing.

We met some great women there who were talking about going over there which they eventually did, taking a party of women and kids. At that stage also there was talk about what specific response of the government would be and some other people sending a canoe and so on... So there was all that discussion going on but nothing had become concrete.

We also went to Tahiti and that was absolutely amazing. I missed a lot of it because I had to stay on the boat, as a result of being deported in 1992 I wasn't allowed off the boat. We arrived and as we came in, just off the port, we could see a huge traffic jam which was the result of 20,000 people walking on the streets! As you come into Tahiti you can see the road out to Faa'a coming down the hill, the big motorway, and it was just packed with people and vehicles. There was a big debate internally within the organisation about whether we should go to Tahiti because some people felt that it was a risk and the French would try and grab us there. I was convinced that they wouldn't, for two reasons really: one I thought they would look very stupid but, secondly, I knew that the population in Tahiti would be very much against that happening and it would be a disaster for them.

So we arrived; we could actually hear the French Police radio which was quite funny because we could hear them go into total panic "Oh my God, there's 20,000 people coming into this road in Tahiti, what are we going to do?" Then, because they filled up the four roads leading into town, someone was going "There's 5,000 people in this road". They thought there was going to be a riot but in fact it was entirely peaceful and for three days people sat on the tarmac, in incredible heat, in support of the boat coming in and also obviously in opposition to the tests. I think there were two reasons they were opposed to the tests; one, because they had got used to the idea that they'd stopped and they didn't ever like them in the first place; but the second one was that they weren't even asked, they weren't consulted (they weren't consulted when they stopped and they weren't consulted when they started again). I think there was just real outrage amongst a lot of Tahitians that that could still happen.

So we had a great welcome. We met some really neat people in Tahiti who were joining the ship - Oscar Temaru and one of the pastors from the evangelical church.

Also, we also met Jacques Gaillot who was a French bishop, he's an amazing guy. You wouldn't take him as a bishop, I have an image of him in his boxer shorts sitting on deck. He was very quiet-spoken but when he spoke everyone listened and he was a very progressive bishop in France who had worked with the people who were excluded from society because of they're emigrants or because of racial things or because they're poor. He had been, not sacked, by the Pope (because you can't be sacked when you're a bishop) but he had

been removed from his parish or his diocese and then given this diocese that no longer exists in the Sahara. But he had also started a little diocese on the Internet. He's an amazing guy, very creative. He'd established this community in Paris where he lived with emigrants and people. He's got a huge following in France; he's not very well known outside France. It was a real coup that he came with us because Greenpeace in France has never really been strong...After the Rainbow Warrior bombing in 1985 the French Government treated Greenpeace as the terrorists, not the Government, and that image really stuck. So it was wonderful that he came. I think it was symbolic really of the fact that the opposition to testing also coincided with a lot of social unrest about Chirac and his policies.

So we sailed off to Moruroa and we had an elaborate plan in that David McTaggart was on board and we were to rendezvous with the Vega then. The three of them - Chris Robinson, David McTaggart and Henk Haazen - headed off into the darkness in an inflatable. At the time we were also preparing ourselves to get to the atoll, we wanted to get to the rigs and delay the preparations for the test (because we knew that the preparations had already started, they were drilling and so on).

We were on Tahitian time but we were working to the New Zealand time. As it turned out, this was actually really critical because nobody in the French military had worked that one out, that we might go on in 9th July Tahitian time because it was the 10th in New Zealand. They weren't prepared for us so we were creeping in on Sunday morning. On the Saturday we'd rendezvoused with the Vega, we'd said goodbye to the inflatable, we thought we'd see them

at some point in the future, we hoped. We got ready to launch the boat and it was surprisingly easy to get into the lagoon.. the problem is what you do when you get in there because obviously that's when the French find you.

(Break)

CE: Here we are on 26th July, back at Greenpeace office with Stephanie, a week later, to continue the story...

SM: One thing I forgot to mention that also happened that Saturday night was that I had a call from the New Zealand office to say that *60 Minutes* had screened the film that David McTaggart was involved in. I suppose at the time I was freaked out because we were just about to go into action mode and the main thing that I was concerned about was that Genevieve Westcott had made some fairly over-the-top claims about what we were doing to do. The significant thing in terms of the Peace Flotilla was that he made a call for a Peace Flotilla to come to Moruroa and obviously that triggered something in a lot of people and when I saw the film, much later (probably October last year), I could see how people had responded because it was quite a powerful call. I suppose at that point it was already in our minds that we were thinking of ways to keep the whole campaign going and to build the campaign over the period up until the tests were supposed to start. So, at that point, it became an issue in the back of my mind but, in the meantime, 9th July, I don't think any of us got much sleep that night after we waved goodbye and we set the inflatables off. So we decided to go towards the lagoon.

We crossed the line pretty early in the morning, it would have been about 5 o'clock maybe, across the 12 mile zone. We dropped the inflatables in two different places; two groups of two inflatables, plus the big Avon. So there were effectively three different locations where the inflatables were. Basically we dropped them while it was still dark, they weren't picked up by the French Navy at that point at all, and so they basically stayed off the lagoon until it was light because we didn't want them going near the reef while it was still dark. That's what they did. We actually saw them zipping past us at times. Once the French realised they were there of course, there was quite a lot of warship activity and a helicopter or two with their spotlights were trying to look for them but inflatables are very difficult to find in the dark, with a bit of a swell (there wasn't a swell actually that day, it was pretty perfect weather).

Anyway, we got ourselves going and we had the bridge pretty barricaded, the journalists were outside on the deck. We'd rigged a video up so that we could see in the radio room what was happening on the bridge (which was pretty fortunate) and we obviously had voice communication as well. So Dave Enever was on the bridge, the skipper, with the rest of the crew (there weren't that many left because most of them were in inflatables. In the radio room was myself, Jean-Luc Thierry (who was a Greenpeace campaigner) and Tom Looney who was a radio operator. Again we pretty much barricaded ourselves in, we'd hung a sign on the door which said "Hospital" (so they'd go there instead of coming into the radio room and so on). We also had the portholes down because we'd talked about whether they might try and ram the ship and it would obviously be safer with the portholes down. It was quite grim and dark with the space in the radio room.

We could see the commandos coming in the distance, they hung off for quite awhile and then they came straight in, just one large zodiac of them, about a dozen. They were all dressed in black with balaclavas and two gas grenades around their belts. They boarded the ship - by that time we were down in the radio room and we could see them trying to work out how to get on to the bridge and they got an axe out and started breaking the windows and eventually got the door open. They also tried to get the front hatch open, which is really heavy steel so they didn't succeed in doing that. They threw something into the bridge and I was worried that it was a real grenade and that the whole bridge was going to explode but it was a teargas grenade and what happened was the bridge filled up with smoke and Dave sent all the crew down below, into the mess.

Shortly afterwards, the whole ship filled up with teargas and so Dave Enever actually took the crew up onto the foredeck because he thought it was unsafe. At that stage, the cameras upstairs had been cut off and we couldn't really see anymore so the last image that we had was of Dave running back to switch off the engines, coughing, and getting everybody downstairs. We started smelling the teargas because although the radio room's quite airtight, there must be some vents that connect with the rest of the ship. So we were trying to stuff all the cracks with tee-shirts and things that we had in the cabin. Obviously it was quite tense and we didn't really know what was going on. We were talking to the BBC and also to Taupo radio here in New Zealand on the long range radio. We were just really waiting to hear what would happen; we could hear the commandos running up and down the corridor and then they

started banging on the door. We couldn't hear what they were saying because it's a big steel door but they started using an axe and, at the same time, the ship was being rammed. Afterwards we found out that one of the big tugs was ramming the starboard side (we were on portside) so the whole ship was shuddering. That happened a few times and it was quite scary because we couldn't see anything and we didn't know it was going to stop or whether we would be stuck in this room. It's a very small little room and with three of us in there it was getting hotter and hotter and the teargas was getting stronger and stronger. Pretty shortly after that, they got the axe through the door. I thought they were just going to try and get the door open but they just sprayed all this teargas in there. I don't know how they got it in, whether they just had it in a spray or whether they let off a grenade and threw it in. The whole room really filled up very fast and it was like a big cloud, you couldn't see a thing, there was a lot of teargas in a very small space. It just got harder and harder to breathe. I didn't really notice that I was crying - I don't think that was my reaction, it was more that it didn't feel like there was any air and we were really suffocating. I was trying to talk because I felt that at least they would All through, I actually listened to the entire tape which we eventually got back from the BBC in the UK, you could hear me saying "Are you there? You must hang on" because I was really convinced at that stage that it was our only kind of lifeline.

I didn't really know but at that stage the French had actually got a whole lot of journalists on one of their warships out there and they saw quite a lot of what was happening but of course from our end we didn't know what was happening out there, we could have been in the middle of nowhere. It just got

to the point where we couldn't talk any longer, we were choking and we managed to get the porthole opened and we were each taking turns to stick our head out and that wasn't very effective either because you got a gasp of fresh air and then you just wanted to have another one and the person behind you was gasping... So Tom, the radio operator, put his head out and then he started sticking his head and shoulders out and I thought "You greedy bastard, taking all the air" as I was choking. Then all of a sudden he shot out and clambered up onto the bridge. So I thought I don't want to stay here, I didn't want to die in the radio room... I couldn't see any alternative so I got out myself and turned around and climbed up onto the bridge. I looked down and there were about 20 commandos in the zodiac, straight below me, I'd thought about jumping into the sea, I thought at least it would keep them going or awhile, (and it was warm, it wasn't cold). So I climbed up I was quite angry. I think they were quite concerned because we were really in a bad way, we were coughing and spluttering and crying and we couldn't really talk. I was just waving my arms, I felt so angry with them. They were quite cocky I suppose and they said "Do you want a doctor?" and I said "No I don't want a doctor, we've got our own doctor" (because Mili, the Fijian doctor was still on board at that point).

They sat us down on the foredeck, put commandos around us, and we just waited to see what would happen and then when they took over the bridge and the rest of the crew were sitting there, they took off the journalists first (they were taken to Moruroa and then flown out to Tahiti), and they took us to Moruroa eventually. We weren't taken there until about 2 in the afternoon, partly because we didn't want to leave the ship so we weren't in a hurry to

leave, but also because they didn't seem to have worked out what they were going to do with us or with the ship. What ended up happening was that they took us off, they put us in a little transport vessel and took us to Moruroa to the village and they towed the ship into the entry and put her on a buoy near the entry to the lagoon.

I was feeling pretty shit by that time, I was really tired and I think the tear gas acted as a bit of a depressant or something. We got to the officers' mess and they put us in this concrete bungalow. We were separated, obviously, from the crew that had come in on the inflatables but we eventually found them. They put us all in two major groups. They did all the usual routine where they try and finger print you and take your photo and get to sign statements, we all basically refused and said "No. We're a peaceful protest"... so eventually they forced your finger onto the piece of ink and then force it on to a piece of paper and they've got your thumb prints. That seemed to go on for a long time and we were quite hungry too by the end of it (they brought us some food though). Then they'd obviously decided to put us back on the boat, although they never told us anything; but they rounded up half of us and put us in a truck and took us down to the dock and said "Wait here". They'd been having trouble with Jean-Luc and Dave Enever who were in the other group, who weren't co-operating with them particularly either, so I think they decided that they'd just put half of us on the ship and get the other half off later but we refused to move.

At that stage, it was actually quite weird because when we got to the dock, we were coming off the open truck thing, and all of the sudden there were TV

cameras everywhere and all the journalists on the Warrior, plus all the journalists that the French had had on their warships based at Moruroa, were there. They wouldn't let us talk to them though, so I started saying "We're here against our will, we want our ship back, we want our crew back, we're not going anywhere until we know where the rest of our crew are". The journalists started asking questions. One of them actually had a French military commando woman with him who put her hand over his mouth so he couldn't ask questions, it was extraordinary. Then, when they got us down to the docks, the tension slowly rose because we could see that there were about 100 or so Foreign legionnaires all lined up in the dark, like 100 yards away, plus various military people on the docks. When they realised that we were talking to the journalists, they got really annoyed and they put a human barrier of legionnaires between us and the journalists so we were shouting. When a couple of the journalists tried to come and talk to us, they threatened to arrest us and got a crowd of them around us.

Then it got to the point where the other group of crew arrived, again we said that we didn't want to go (we didn't know where they were taking us)... They were getting really annoyed with us and I said okay and we sat on the ground and linked our arms together, because we didn't know what was going to happen, and all of a sudden the legionnaires crowded around us in a big circle and they gave a command and then they decided to get some stuff and put us on the boat. They went to me and Dave first because they thought we were trouble-makers and then dragged the rest of the crew around there as well. It was weird because the whole media were there but they were completely paralysed and completely not allowed to do anything.

We were taken out to the boat and the whole place was really disgusting. We got out there about midnight I suppose. They towed us out to well past the 12 mile zone. The gendarmes stayed on board until about 2 or 3 in the morning and then they left. Again, we got on there and Tom and I just made straight for the radio room and worked out that the phones weren't working, but they'd just disconnected it, they hadn't broken it or anything. So we got it up and going and rang Greenpeace and rang ... It was quite funny, I was just determined to tell everybody what had happened and apparently they'd tried to come into the radio room and stop me talking on the phone... I really don't know what happened because I was just so focused on letting the rest of the world know where we were.

The crew were amazing, we were all totally exhausted because we'd been awake for at least 36 hours by then, probably more like 48, and there was a lot of mess. Apart from the teargas, the French had broken windows and there was glass and stuff everywhere, and gunk everywhere, the crew cleaned it up and were really great. About 5.30 in the morning someone said to me "You've got to go to bed Stephanie", so I went to bed.

We woke up the next morning, we were 100 miles from Moruroa basically and were deciding what to do. We went back to Tahiti because Bastille Day was on the 14th and we knew there were big demonstrations planned then and we decided that was going to be a good place to be, to keep the pressure on the French, and I think that was the right decision. It was a very big demonstration, not as big as the one on the day we arrived in Tahiti the first

time around but it was big. So while Gaston Flosse was having his picnic at Moruroa on Bastille Day... we were at Tahiti, and then we sailed across to Fiji because the boat needed repairs; the bow was quite damaged from the ramming and some of the electronics weren't working too well. We also wanted to go and visit all the representatives from South Pacific foreign countries, because the Pacific Governments, they'd made rhetorical statements but there hadn't been a lot of pressure coming from them so we wanted to make sure they got the message. It was also a good place to get the repairs done so we went there. We kept talking to the Vega on radio and they were having some intermittent conversations with the Greenpeace inflatable.

So eventually we were in Fiji from mid July through to mid August. We had a great welcome when we got there; all the dancing and university students.... Lots of people came down. The Government wasn't particularly enthusiastic and didn't want to be put on the spot because the French were offering aid But we had a good time there. Basically, when we hit land as it were, we got thrown into organising the Flotilla and I spent a lot of my time on the phone or on electronic mail to people, sorting out a lot of European MPs and VIPs who wanted to come on the Flotilla. We were organising a Peace Flotilla in France, down the River Seine, for Hiroshima Day or maybe it was for 1st September - no I think it was before that actually. So Greenpeace was out organising a demonstration in France (which was ultimately banned but we went ahead anyway). There was just offices all over the world doing the most amazing things and people asking for information, etc.

Janet Dalziell was working in New Zealand on the Flotilla and we were trying to work out what to do for Stage 2. There was a lot of internal discussion and disagreements and agreements and changing our minds and all the rest of it. About 12th in Fiji, just before we left, we had a meeting about what things to do and then we sailed to Tahiti which was a horrible trip, it was really rough weather for about three days, then it was glorious weather by the time we got to Tahiti. We picked up a whole load of more journalists there and went out to the MV Greenpeace and the Vega again which had gone into Tahiti in the meantime and back out again. The Greenpeace had come down from Barcelona, so we met them on 28th or 29th August, off the 200 mile zone and there were all these different yachts arriving. None of the ones that we thought were going to be there were there! There was a little yacht from Chile and a French double-hander and the Cook Island waka that turned up and a couple of other boats - the Tryptych turned up and the Tui was there.... (we'd get the odd visitor from these boats who weren't supposed to be visiting us).

So we spent a lot of time basically getting things sorted out for 1st September which included deciding whether 1st September was really the day to go in or what we should be doing. We basically agreed that unless we got news to the contrary, we had to assume that they were going to test, if not on the 1st, within the first few days and also that we needed to try and get people into the actual testing area itself and have some documentation of that. Again, we basically had inflatables off the ship going in beforehand, that morning, then the Warrior. It was pretty weird because you were sort of playing with what happened last time in your head and at the same time it was a different situation. The weather was really not so nice, quite rough in the inflatables

and I remember thinking "Oh God! I hope the crew is going to be alright." You're so busy doing things at the time, you don't really have time to feel about things and again we'd set up video cameras in the radio room but we'd also worked out a steering system so that John Carter (who we had for skipper that time) could skipper from the mast and the crows nest. We kind of camouflaged the crows nest so when we went in, he managed to steer for a bit longer than if we'd had the bridge taken over.

But they basically went through the same thing; they boarded her, they took a lot of equipment, they went for every single possible cable, wire, rope. They'd obviously made a very clear decision to cut communication straight off and they also had scuttled to get into the engine room and they just cut the engine room off very very quickly. We were dragged out of the radio room again and taken on to the deck. It was bizarre actually because while we were sitting there on the deck, the video operator had a little shortwave radio so he was listening to Radio Australia and the German journalists (I can't remember his name), he had a little portable briefcase satellite phone (which costs millions of dollars). So, after a few hours, he was setting this up and he allowed each of the journalists to use it, like one call to their stations (because they're journalists, they just wanted to get off and get home to go and file a story, they didn't really care what happened after that). We also called Greenpeace Communications and we also heard on the radio that they'd seized the Greenpeace outside in international waters. We'd seen the helicopter, in fact they hadn't warned the Greenpeace that they were going to take the helicopter in, they just said the helicopter must return to the ship. I'd talked to the Tahiti office and said the Greenpeace hadn't been warned they were

going to take the helicopter and they might want to talk to the Greenpeace or whatever. They said two Greenpeace ships had been taken; the other thing was, the Vega had possibly planned to go in that morning as well, so when we heard that two ships were taken, we weren't even sure which ships they were (because we were incommunicado by that stage).

Again, the French obviously hadn't decided what to do exactly, after doing the boarding.

CE: Can you tell us a little bit more about the boarding because that's very dramatic?

SM: The only funny thing about it was they were really bad at boat handling and boarding the boat and they'd put this little boarding ladder up on the side of the boat and then, of course, when one of them was on it, it was still attached to their inflatable and the wave went up and the ladder went up and flipped over and the commando had to do a somersault and ended up on the deck flat on his back and the rest of them kind of clambered on in a very unwieldy way, they were pretty pathetic boat-handlers, compared with Greenpeace people who are reasonably professional!

There were only seven of us on board (because the others were all in inflatables) and again they zoomed up alongside, they came up on board and they had cans of spray paint and they sprayed all the windows. It was so dark you couldn't see, which was kind of weird because when you've got radar and everything it's not like you're going to bump into something immediately. So

we were watching downstairs and all we could see was the windows filled up with spray paint and then they had an arc-grinder and they cut open the door and came in. At that point we lost visibility but again they had an arc grinder to open the radio room this time, instead of just an axe, and they came in. The only radio had that we could operate at that time was VHF, by the time they actually came into the room (because they'd cut all the cables on the telephones and everything else outside), I was talking on the VHF (not that I necessarily thought anybody could hear me, but we just thought that if the Greenpeace was still in range they might hear us). In the end they just grabbed the thing out of my hand and broke the microphone off the cable and dragged us out onto the deck.

I think they were in some ways more aggressive the second time. They were basically the same crew, or at least the commander was still the same. They brought a whole lot of other naval guys out and they took over the deck and they said we could stay on the foredeck only. It was really quite hot and we were just sitting there in the sun. They didn't seem to know what to do; whether to take us into the lagoon or keep outside or whatever. As the ship was disabled, it wasn't like they could come on and drive it anywhere. Eventually they decided to tow the ship. They broke a couple of tow lines before they got us hooked up to this navy ship and at the same time we'd heard on Radio Australia that John was up the mast (we knew he was up the mast) but it was really funny because we were pissing ourselves laughing because none of them had a clue and it wasn't until the next day (so he'd been up there 30 hours) they obviously got suspicious and they must have been told and there was a news story that there was somebody up the mast.

Derek said to them at one point, before they seemed suspicious, that he wanted to check one of the masts because they'd cut some of the wires, but they wouldn't let him go up there. Then they tried to get out the fire hoses to fire hose Jon down but Rob had turned them off so that they just emptied out off the side of the ship instead of building up pressure so they couldn't hose him down. ...

CE: How did he hide up there?

SM: We'd made a little platform around the crows nest with a little shield around it, it didn't look like a hiding place from the deck but it was quite good. In fact the last communication we'd really had was John talking to the Greenpeace with his radio but then the batteries went flat after about 24 hours.

CE: I see, from up there.

SM: That was at the start of the first day but the Greenpeace got taken off too.

They demanded that he came down and eventually he agreed to because they wanted to send somebody up to bring him down basically and he didn't want them to get hurt or anything. So he was coming down and Tim had found this camera. They'd searched all the cabins and taken everybody's gear and lots of stuff but they'd missed this camera. So I had his camera stuffed down my shorts and while they weren't looking I pulled it out and took a photo. Then I was putting the camera back and they saw the camera and these two commandos just jumped me, they were really furious and they

threw me on the deck, twisted my arms up around my back and grabbed the camera and threw the whole thing over the side....

After that, things calmed down a bit because the commander ordered that one guy sat down next to me but they didn't sit on me, and after about 10 minutes they cooled down a bit! After that, things got pretty boring actually because we kept hassling them because, after 48 hours it's illegal to hold anybody in detention, so after the first 48 hours, we were literally just going around in circles, being towed by this boat outside Moruroa. We could see the drilling rig and we could see the Greenpeace in the distance. In fact they towed the Greenpeace in to Moruroa and took some of the crew off and then brought it back out again. So we were both out of the lagoon.

CE: Were you circling around the whole atoll?

SM: No we weren't even circling around the whole atoll, just outside the pass. We were just going around and around a three or four mile circuit. They got pretty bored too, they put a load of infantry on and the commandos eventually left after about two or three days. I think on the third day they said that we were going to Hao.

CE: How did they feed you during this time, did you get fed?

SM: We made our own food. They offered us some tinned stuff which was disgusting.

CE: So they let you down in the mess of the ship.

SM: We weren't allowed to go on the bridge and we weren't allowed in the radio room, they kind of locked it up. We weren't allowed in the engine room. So we were just allowed on the deck and in the accommodation.

CE: How did you sleep?

SM: With my room locked!

CE: Not an easy sleep.

SM: We took turns doing watch. I felt okay about that, I just kept my door locked because I was the only woman on board and I didn't feel that comfortable about that at times. Basically we spent our time hassling them. After about four or five days we ended up playing cards with them and having furious arguments about nuclear deterrence, and cooking (because we'd got so bored) - Derek made peanut brownies, John made bread I think. We could see the atoll in the distance and we figured that they wouldn't keep us there when the test actually went off, which was right - they did, and they started towing us towards Hao.

What had happened, I suppose, was that this was this big build up of tension in Tahiti, which we didn't really know about. So they towed us up to Hao, we went round and round in circles at Hao, and eventually they took us into the lagoon and took us off. Again, they were real bastards - there was a new

group of gendarmes there to meet us who'd been flown out, they were a special riot squad that had originally been flown out to Tahiti to deal with any problems that arose during the South Pacific Games there, so they'd been out in Tahiti for about a month or so...

They were really furious with us and they obviously thought we were a Red Army gang or something, it was just ridiculous. Some of them dragged me off on my own and it was the only time I was actually really scared because I knew I was literally in the middle of nowhere and on my own and there's nothing I could do. There was one guy who was supposedly acting as an interpreter although his English was worse than my French (I basically interpreted for him!) He obviously thought that they were being a bit unreasonable with me or that he felt sorry for me so he was trying to get them to be nice to me. They were dragging me along; they just grabbed my arms and legs and dragged me along the ground... They dragged me along this bloody coral path which was a bit painful. I was so furious, I wasn't going to walk, I was just absolutely not willing to co-operate with them because they weren't telling us anything, they'd lied to us consistently.

For example, on the passage from Moruroa to Hao, which is only about a day, they'd initially said that we could have a phone call and then said that we couldn't. So we'd actually broken into the radio room while they weren't noticing (I don't know how they didn't notice)! We got a radio and tried to set it up in my bathroom. It felt like of what it would have been like during the war... we had this funny evening where we were trying to rig up an aerial and we couldn't really rig it up vertically so we tried to rig it up horizontally along the

ship. We tied it to the end of a broomstick and we pushed it along a few cabins and pulled it in the other one. They were supposedly guarding us but they didn't even notice, they weren't really doing their job particularly well! Then they figured out that we'd got into the radio room and they wanted to search all our stuff and we refused. So it went on and on like that. They were always trying to search us or hassle us or something.

They had let us have this one phone call eventually, so we rigged up the phone, managed to get it working, had our one phone call and then they decided that we weren't allowed to communicate any more.

So we got to Hao. The New Zealand office had been hassling them at the New Zealand end (this was like six days after we'd been on board) so when I got to Hao, midway through the afternoon, they said the New Zealand Consul from Tahiti's going to call you. We took the call in this guy's office. I think he's actually a military intelligence guy based at the High Commission in Tahiti, while we were in there in his office, waiting for this call, he got a call from the High Commission. I could only hear one side of the conversation but they were talking about gendarmes and riots, etc. He came off the phone spitting... he said "You're murderers, you're thieves". I said "What are you talking about?" And he was talking about the riots in Tahiti when that policeman was quite badly injured. We didn't know what the hell he was talking about, but he wouldn't tell us about it. Anyway, we had our phone call, to Amanda, the New Zealand Consulate representative.

It was quite funny when we got to Hao (they'd brought the Greenpeace in as well) there was quite a number of us but they split us up into two groups - the ones that had EC passports basically and the ones that didn't, because they couldn't really do anything about the EC passport holders. Also, they'd decided that there was this core group of terrorists (which was me, Derek and Phillip, because we'd all been previously deported, plus the skippers, Peter and John, plus Paula the helicopter pilot - five of us) so they separated us from everybody else. So everybody else was taken down to the village and spent the next couple of days waiting for a flight back to Tahiti. The village was actually dominated by Oscar Temaru's independence movement so it was quite funny really. So they were all looked after by these people.

CE: So there wasn't a military base at that time?

SM: Well there's a base on half the island, but the other half is a civilian village ... so they were kept in the village.

The five of us were kept in the barracks at the military base. I wasn't even allowed to go to the toilet on my own, I was escorted and they kept the door open while I was on the toilet. It was quite funny because at that stage I was the only French speaker I think, so I was doing the interpreting and Paula was sitting there doing her knitting and drinking this terrible wine that they'd given us, and comparing French and Californian wine, whilst I translated! In between doing that I was hassling them about access to lawyers and communication and playing "bad cop" really.

Eventually they got sick of us and they waited around and around; it was just interminable, these hours that you spent waiting while they decided to do things. Then they took us to a truck and took us just out of the airport and put us on this Caravelle. It was freight jet basically, it was full of big steel containers, except for about three or four rows of seats at the back. So we were put at the back, with about a dozen gendarmes, and told we were flying to Tahiti.

CE: Were they watching you?

SM: They were our guards. So, anyway, we'd been in the air a little while and I said to Paula "It doesn't take three or four hours to fly to Tahiti". She said "no", so we figured we must be going to the States.

... it's really funny in a plane because you're actually in an incredibly intimate surroundings in a way but even when you're on a commercial flight you don't necessarily chat next to your neighbour if you know you're going to be sitting next to them for the next 20 hours. So it was odd ... because we had all the gendarmes around us... so I was trying to come across as a real human being and my guard was being really gendarmish.

CE: How old was he, do you think?

SM: He was younger than me, he was about 28. He was quite uncomfortable with me being a woman and also because I was sort of in charge... But again they were being really stupid, like they wouldn't let us go to the toilet alone (like

what could we do in an aeroplane toilet, it was completely bizarre). The head of that particular squad was a particularly ugly guy (he looked like Kojak, he didn't have any hair), who was really nasty; he obviously thought we were scum.

Anyway, we were in the air awhile and we figured out we must be going to Los Angeles and I hassled the gendarme in a polite way and he eventually told us that that was where we going and that we were then going on to Paris. We got to Los Angeles and they let Paula off because she was an American citizen. She's a pilot so she knows all about airports and things, so, as we were coming in, she said "Oh, they're taking us to the bomb area" - we were in an area of the Los Angeles airport where commercial flights don't go, it's for when there's a terrorist alert or something like that, they take planes down there so they can isolate them from the rest of the airport. Anyway, we were all saying "We want to get off here too". They got all tense again and all crowded around the door so we couldn't get through. They didn't have guns I don't think, from memory, but they made sure we couldn't get out. (I was walking up to the door and trying to go down the steps, that sort of thing.)

This Hispanic guy came on who was from a catering firm to bring some more food on and I was saying "We're prisoners, we're held here against our will". He obviously didn't speak a word of English and he really didn't want to know, as far as he was concerned he was totally involved in catering. So we said to Paula "You've got to tell everybody what's happening and let people know that we've been kidnapped, effectively".

So we flew off for another ten hours and we got to Paris. It was 4a.m. in the morning when we got to Le Bourget (which is the military airport in Paris)... When we landed it was quite dark and raining and the whole plane was surrounded by riot police. It felt like Casablanca; it was really bizarre, for four of us. So, anyway, I was still in a tee-shirt, I was freezing so I said "I'm not going until you give me my baggage". I had a swandri in my bag and they let me put that on. They wanted to go off without my shoes on...

CE: This is autumn in Paris, it would have been really cold?

SM: Yes it was really cold. Of course there was a new lot of people who came on the plane so again, the ones that had got used to us who realised we weren't terrorists, were going and didn't have any control any more and the French-based ones were coming on and being bastards; they were more or less in Inspector Clousteau kind of trench-coats! So they took us off in a little white police van, sirens going across the tarmac and into this small immigration office type place. Again they refused to let us see lawyers, they just wanted to deport us straight away, to where we all wanted to go basically (and I said Amsterdam because I didn't want to go straight back to New Zealand and I wanted to see what was happening with the rest of the Greenpeace world). They got really pissed off with me because I wouldn't sign this piece of paper...

When I argued with them about it they decided to go and talk to Derek, thinking he might be a bit more reasonable and they left me with a female gendarme and a male one, in this room which had windows out on to the road

opposite the airport, with chicken wire across the windows. It was still dark (it must have been about 5 o'clock). All of a sudden I could hear this knocking on the window and someone calling my name. I wondered what on earth was happening. I thought "It must be Greenpeace people". What had happened was, Michael had found out from the New Zealand media that we were being taken to Paris so they'd hassled the NZ Embassy in France who'd found out which airport we were getting flown to and approximately when. So the Greenpeace people they'd come out to the airport and somehow managed to con their way into the airport because I don't think anyone is generally let through. They were outside on the pavement, with a TV crew. So I made a dash for the window and slung the windows open because it wasn't really a locked window, I just pulled them open... By that time the two gendarmes had sprung into action and dragged me back from the window and sat on me on the floor and then said "We'll put you in another room". So they dragged me into this other room, unbeknown to them obviously, the Greenpeace people had got around the back of the building, next to this other room, so I kept making a dash to that window and pulling open the curtain. They sat me on the floor and said they'd arrest me if I didn't co-operate. So I said "Arrest me for what?" Anyway, in the end, they said to me "If we get you a lawyer, will you promise to be quiet?" So I said "Okay" but asked them for a translator (because I knew I'd need a translator because the French lawyer probably wouldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak enough French). So they agreed to let Remi, the President of Greenpeace France, in to do that. When he came in, he whips his tape recorder out of his pocket and said "Give us a run-down, tell the world what's been going on". I said "God, I'm absolutely exhausted"...

After five minutes or so, they shoed him out and then they took us in these vans again across Paris to Charles de Gaulle airport to fly us out of France. The funny thing was, it was very Inspector Clousteau, I could just see how they operated like little boys. They had us in two separate vans with a car in front and the car in front took off so fast that the van behind us got lost, or we lost them, and then they figured they didn't have any phone or radio communication with the second van. We had to pull up on the side of this motorway and wait for the second van to catch up with us. And then when we got to the airport they couldn't find the police entrance so we were going round and round in circles trying to find the right entrance to the airport! Then they took us through to the waiting room. The New Zealand Consulate came down and visited us there, well there was nothing he could really do. Then they put me on a flight to Amsterdam and Phillip and Derek went on a flight to New Zealand (an Air New Zealand flight).

CE: You didn't have a press conference or anything when you went to Amsterdam?

SM: I forgot about that... I got to Amsterdam. It was amazing actually because it's a funny building and I guess a lot of people work there that don't know people from the rest of Greenpeace and sometimes it can be quite torrid in fact because people don't know everybody...

So I got there into the building ... it was spontaneous, people just came out. It's a three or four storey building with a staircase around the whole building,

with the offices further back from the staircase and the whole staircase was suddenly full of people, welcoming me. It was fantastic. And we had a press conference that afternoon.

CE: Who came to the press conference, like there were lots of people?

SM: Yes.

CE: What's it like at Greenpeace Amsterdam? Is it their own building?

SM: I think it's leased for a low rental from the Dutch Government. It's a lovely old building, it's just around the corner from the Anne Frank house.... I was so exhausted.. I stayed awake for the press conference and then I went back to the hotel and then tried to sleep and then people were ringing from New Zealand of course and I was ringing them, and people from the UK. I felt like I'd been out of circulation for a week - well I had - it was like being cut off from the world. I can imagine if you'd been under house arrest...

CE: And the toll it would pay on yourself too, the adrenalin flow...

SM: I had to wear the same clothes for the next week or so, I didn't have any clothes or any money or anything.

CE: What did you do after that, did you go on holiday?

SM: Yes I came back here for about a month. I was in Amsterdam until the end of September and I was here for October/November and then I took December and January off. I just needed a complete break from it. And there was all the internal eruption about who decided what and all the rest of it. It's interesting looking back on it because I suppose the first time going in on 10th July it was quite a small core of people who'd basically worked on the campaign for the last seven years, even longer than that, I was a newcomer really... The second time it was a much bigger group of people and the lack of clarity about the roles and where the decision-making fell was much more difficult and of course there was the Greenpeace, there was the Warrior, Peace Flotilla's other boats, the Vega... It was quantity not quality in some ways but I think it was worth it. It feels like, although I'm not sure what's going to happen to the (CTBT) Treaty now because there's still disagreements, it may never enter into force because of India but I think it was amazing to be part of something that was so huge that you were just really a little piece of it but you felt that you'd made a reasonably good contribution.

CE: And brought a lot of world media and public attention to it all over the world.

SM: I wonder what would have happened if we'd stayed home and the French testing had gone ahead without the protest at Moruroa. I think it would have been dreadful.

(general conversation about Europe - mostly inaudible)

It wasn't really until I got back here that I realised how big it had been here too, I mean it had been big in Europe but not big in the same way, like here it had been on the TV every night and how that had affected the office here and my family, they're quite big things really.

CE: My brother works for TV3 and from the beginning of August for two months, out of their news library, he's made a whole videotape about Moruroa and Greenpeace and the Peace Flotilla and it's three hours long....

SM: I don't think you can do that sort of thing too often in your lifetime really.

CE: Is there anything you'd like to say as a final closing statement?

SM: People think that Greenpeace did something amazing but I really think that the Peace Flotilla who often had to give up jobs or had to remortgage their houses or whatever, they're still living with the emotional and financial consequences of it. They've done heaps more in a way. I didn't lose my job, I was paid while I was doing it. I just think working for Greenpeace is amazing that you can be paid while you're doing it ... but on the other hand, there were hard times when the media got critical, like "You're not going to be able to stop the tests, what are you doing it for?" You get so sick of it all. I felt like a tape recorder sometimes because you were giving the same responses to the same stupid questions.... And you feel really cynical, or really depressed, about whether you can change anything.

But I know they've signed the Rarotonga Treaty, they'll never test again. France is actually worse off of all the testing countries because they're the only country that's signed up to a definitive end to testing and the only way they can operate.... So that's got to be good.

(transcribed 1.8.96)

