

Terry Wogan RIP

Sunday, 31 January 2016

Terry Wogan and I knew each other well, though we were never that close personally. I was his test guest on the pilot for his first TV chat show - his producer Gordon Elsbury was my director on Entertainment USA and asked me if I would do it as a favour.

I had worked with Terry many times on radio and TV - from Blankety Blank to everything else. And when I took over the quest to find a UK winner for Eurovision I had dinner with him and asked him, please, not to be negative about our finalists in the national contest. I loved his tongue in cheek approach to Eurovision but I felt we needed to boost up the finalists in order to find a winner; he was delightful and totally co-operative.

But he did bring me to tears once. After the unpleasantness in 2000, I was still running the UK Eurovision side and was in some foreign country in 2001 for the May contest. Traditionally before the show all the team had a huge dinner which Terry paid for. Helen, his lovely wife, was there amongst others. It was a difficult time for me with the Old Bailey trial coming up that autumn. But I was putting a brave face on it and coping well.

At the end of the evening as we split up Terry took me to one side when I said goodbye, shook my hand, looked me in the eye and said Good luck my dear friend.

When I went out I found tears running down my cheek. I really appreciated it. We weren't close friends but the message was clear. A very sweet, nice man.