

Q1) How long did you work in the TV industry for?

Fiona: about **14 years**.

Q2) Out of interest, where...did you work at one station for the whole time?

Fiona: No I worked at Yorkshire Television on children's television...then I worked at a place called SAS which did sport...and then the majority of my time was at ITN doing news.

Q3) So during those 14 years, which areas of the TV industry, which you got to experience, did you feel were the most accessible for women? And why do you think so?

Fiona: I thought they were **all accessible to my generation**, what I noticed was that almost invariably, because I always had technical roles rather than production roles, so not production assistant or producer or not in front of the camera, just **technical behind-the-camera roles**. And what I really noticed was that **for my generation there was a reasonably good mix of males and females**, it was **nearly 50/50**. But, a lot of the **people who were senior**, and who had been...quite a lot of people at ITN had been **there for like 20 years, they were all men**. So there was **clearly a kind of change in the last 20 years** I would say, however, the atmosphere, although women were definitely employed, the atmosphere wasn't always conducive, particularly in **sport** I would say, there was **extreme sexism**.

Q4) So did you experience direct sexism during that time?

Fiona: **Yeah all the time**, like when I worked at the **sports** place...just **sexist comments** all the time. We were filming horse racing mostly and so the **banter in the gallery was very masculine, very sexist**, and just stuff like, in between the races, the camera men were just **zooming on women's body parts** that were at the races and **make comments on them** and stuff like that. So it was **really really permanent** and all of us girls who were working there were like early 20s and were maybe **not quite old enough to challenge it**, I would say.

Q5) And so did you feel there were any areas you saw where...which were just completely inaccessible for women, that no woman could probably get a job in?

Fiona: Yeah...there were **no women sports presenters at that time**. In terms of technical roles, as I said, a lot of the junior people were technical. One area was the **camera people, tended to always be male**. So the women, the girls would do VT, sound, the gallery roles, but the people who went out in the field and had the satellite link trucks and were filming out in the field were...**I don't even remember, even in the news, like one female camera person**. So definitely editors, and stuff like that, but **not so much going out in the field**.

Q6) And what about, say, the upper-management?

Fiona: **Quite a lot of producers were female**, the upper-management. Certainly at the **sports place, and the news place, were men actually**. You know, like the **exec producers and the program editors**, and stuff like that, were men. However, I don't want to be unbalanced because in news, **the news room in general was pretty 50/50**, they **just weren't always in the most senior of roles**. I don't know if that's a throwback from the fact that **you'd have had to work your way up for a long time** and, you know, as I said, **20 years ago it was much worse**, so I don't know if that's the reason. I think though there has also been a **perception that women aren't as strong in technical roles**, that might have something to do with it. Possibly, there's a **perception that women are gonna stop and have kids at some point and maybe that doesn't make good managers**, perhaps that's the perception, I'm not sure. But **there's certainly powerful women at ITN, but not the most powerful**.

Q7) Did you ever feel prevented from excelling or going up the kind of, I don't know the best way to put it-

Fiona: ladder

Billy: -ladder...the different promotions, because of your gender?

Fiona: Not me personally, but that's because I never had any ambition to climb the ladder, I quite liked doing what I was doing, so I wouldn't have had a problem with that. I think, perhaps, the women who might have found it more tricky...there was a sense **in the news that the presenters were always pretty**, definitely, whereas, I don't know if you've noticed but, the **male presenters...doesn't matter what they look like**. So, if I had been going for presenting roles, I think it **would have been really difficult**. I think **looks plays a massive part in it, for presenters**.

Q8) Say if I'd known that you'd worked in fictional TV, I was going to probably ask if you felt that women's stories, in general, felt unappreciated, or felt they were more unfit for viewing?

Fiona: I definitely think **in general that there's a masculine perspective**, if you just look at the **number of male protagonists compared to female protagonists**, TV and film, yeah definitely, definitely. Women's TV shows, I know you're talking about fiction but, **women's TV shows tend to follow certain genres to do with looking nice, creating a home**, those kinds of things. I know there's exceptions but that's sort of how it feels I think, and often **a lot of the female characters still seem to be like, periphery or there is something to save or acquire**, so yeah, I would say in a general sense.

Q9) So to finish off, what do you think is, maybe the key reason or reasons for the lack of women?

Fiona: **Partly historical**. As I said, like **20 years ago, 30 years ago, it was definitely really different**. Partly nobody, well that's not true to say nobody's fighting it, people definitely are fighting it, it's just **hard to change a culture**, and **that is the culture**, that **men's stories kind of dominate** and stuff like that. In terms of employment, I think **it's a lot better now**. I think maybe it **just takes time for women to filter, up the ladder, into the senior management jobs**. But, having said that, I do still think that **there is an issue, if you look in general at pay, at women's pay, there's something serious, like 10 or something % less than men**, always, like on the average. So if you look at stuff like that, that just tells you that **we're still in a society which is patriarchal**.

Q10) When you were going up for, trying to get into the industry, did you feel, initially, that it was always going to be harder for you.

Fiona: No, the only time where I ever really, like I say, where I really noticed that it was difficult, was in the **sports place**, and that was just this **massively, masculine atmosphere**, and nobody, like the women that were there, like I say, were really young so **nobody would put them right**. I could imagine, **in certain genres of TV, it could still be like that**, I think.