JEREMY VINE:
So now we know that another of the BBC’s household names, Stuart Hall, is guilty of serious sexual crimes. They may have been a long time ago, but by all accounts some took place on the premises and other staff knew about them. Again the question is asked, just as it was with Savile, does the BBC take responsibility for the behaviour of its stars or just turn a blind eye? These are pressing matters for the Chairman of the BBC Trust, Lord Patten, who went through the whole Savile crisis and has now hit two years in the job, and he joins us now. Good morning to you.

LORD PATTEN:
Hello.

JEREMY VINE:
So this does bring back all the issues that came up with Savile, doesn’t it?

LORD PATTEN:
Absolutely, yeah. And Dame Janet Smith, the very distinguished judge who’s looking
at the background to Savile - at whether the BBC was complicit, turned a blind eye, knew about what was going on and didn’t do anything about it - Dame Janet Smith’s inquiry will I hope embrace what’s happening with Stuart Hall as well. They’re awful, awful allegations and stories, and of course we look back on the Sixties and Seventies and we know that that way of treating women, of treating employees, is something that was, thank god, put an end to by feminism, which people used to sneer about.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Linda McDougall, who was a producer in Manchester in the Sixties and Seventies says Hall had a room set aside at the BBC and other people were helping get women into it.

**LORD PATTEN:**
Well if that’s true, it’s appalling, and it’s exactly the sort of thing that Janet Smith will be investigating.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Is she up to that job?

**LORD PATTEN:**
Yes. But if she needs any more resources, if we need to do any more, we will of course because one thing which we’ve shown already with Nick Pollard’s report and Diana Rose’s report is that we want to get to grips with this awful business. Other institutions would, I’m sure, be doing the same.

**JEREMY VINE:**
But in the past we’ve left it to the police and ITV, haven’t we?

**LORD PATTEN:**
Well there were particular problems with the Savile case, you’re quite right, which was why we had that Pollard Inquiry into what went wrong with Newsnight. What he demonstrated, which people sometimes forget, is that while it was a terrible mistake not to carry a report on Savile, it wasn’t a result of trying to cover up the corporate reputation of the BBC.
JEREMY VINE:
Do you think this is a sign of a deeper malaise in the BBC?

LORD PATTEN:
Yeah, well I think there has been a real problem and that we need to get a grip on current affairs in particular. We do some wonderful current affairs investigating: journalists like Peter Taylor, like John Ware, like Jane Corbin fantastic reporting. We have to make sure that we can continue to do good investigative journalism, but do so in a way which is balanced and fair.

JEREMY VINE:
But in the whole trajectory of the Savile story and now the Hall story, are you ready for more to come out? Is there going to be another case like this?

LORD PATTEN:
I hope not, but plainly there was something about the celebrity culture in the Sixties, Seventies, Eighties which meant that people were prepared, apparently, to turn a blind eye to behaviour which wasn’t just eccentric but thoroughly unpleasant.

JEREMY VINE:
Victim Susan Harrison saying, “Both Hall and Savile groomed girls on BBC premises” - this is a victim of Hall - “and I would go so far as to say they were helped in their abuse by other BBC staff because they must have known.”

LORD PATTEN:
Well if that was the case and Janet Smith is looking at it, then we want to see that evidence, we want to get it out in public and deal with it in that way because it’s intolerable.

JEREMY VINE:
The Hall victims, the Stuart Hall victims want a separate inquiry.

LORD PATTEN:
Well I think to set up a new inquiry when there’s already one which is extremely well resourced operating would probably delay arriving at the truth, which is presumably what they want.

**JEREMY VINE:**
But it’s not purpose built this one for Stuart Hall, is it?

**LORD PATTEN:**
(over) Look, this is … No, but it’s built for what one wants to investigate, which is the culture which allowed this sort of thing to happen. But look, if we need to do more, we will, and at the end of the day what we have to do is to provide answers which will satisfy people that we’ve been prepared to deal with our own dirty washing.

**JEREMY VINE:**
And will the BBC be liable for compensation in the Stuart Hall case?

**LORD PATTEN:**
I imagine so, but that’ll be a matter for the lawyers and conceivably for the courts.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Have you thought about how much?

**LORD PATTEN:**
No. No, I think it would be incredible to be able to do that now because first of all what needs to happen is we need to get a grip on what actually happened and we need of course in the meantime to cooperate fully with the police. It’s a different case to the Savile one because the main person who’s alleged to have committed these crimes, who committed these crimes - he’s owned up to some of them - is actually alive.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Part of the damage to the BBC was caused by the DG George Entwistle’s first response to all of this, and he went after fifty-four days and you appointed him. So do you at some point have to take your own responsibility for that?
LORD PATTEN:
Well we have to take responsibility as a trust for appointing George Entwistle who was tragically …

JEREMY VINE:
(over) You personally, I mean.

LORD PATTEN:
Well pers… I’m chairman of the trust, so of course. We appointed unanimously the person we thought was best for the job and, ironically, the very issues that he’d argued he wanted to tackle when he became DG were the issues that actually pulled him down. So we then appointed a new director general within about twelve days - we were commended for acting swiftly and decisively - and I very much hope that the new director general, who’s an outstanding man, Tony Hall, will continue to put the BBC back on an even keel. What is surprising - this isn’t grounds for smugness or complacency - is that the figures for trust in the BBC have bounced back pretty rapidly.

JEREMY VINE:
Well up until we got the Stuart Hall story that’s true …

LORD PATTEN:
(over) Yeah that’s true.

JEREMY VINE:
… that’s true. You’re now being attacked again in public by, for example, John Whittingdale who heads the Culture Committee, who says that you’re “damaged” and you’re looking “tired and grey”. Want to comment on that?

LORD PATTEN:
Well it's for other people to say whether I’m looking tired and grey.

JEREMY VINE:
Well damaged I was thinking you might want to comment on.

**LORD PATTEN:**
I don’t think honestly anybody fair-minded could blame me for what happened in the Sixties and Seventies and Eighties, though I’m extremely sad that it did happen.

**JEREMY VINE:**
And Greg Dyke saying it’s time for an early bath?

**LORD PATTEN:**
Well if Greg Dyke was doing an interview on flower arranging, he’d find a way of turning it into an attack on me. It’s worth remembering that he presided over the BBC at the last big crisis, and as a result of that we have the present system of governance of the BBC which was completely changed because of the Greg Dyke business.

**JEREMY VINE:**
So looking forward, what changes do you want to see in the BBC in the next say couple of years?

**LORD PATTEN:**
I want to see us giving value for money to the licence fee payer. I want to see us making even better quality programmes. And I want to see the figures for trust, which have come back remarkably - maybe damaged by the Stuart Hall case - continue to grow because the most important thing for the BBC is to be trusted as a great national institution.

**JEREMY VINE:**
And you have a new director general. Is that a fresh start now?

**LORD PATTEN:**
He’s terrific. He’s both I think, as I’ve said - mixing my metaphors - a sigh of relief and a wind of change. I think he’s a really, really good and creative Head of the BBC. He did a brilliant job at the Royal Opera House and he’s appointing a very good team.
JEREMY VINE:
Chris Patten, thank you very much indeed.

LORD PATTEN:
Thank you very much indeed.

INTERVIEW ENDS