

what came to be known as 'The Pop Code' – a set of guidelines for safety at concerts, which I believe Lord Melchett was instrumental in drawing up. It was a document full of good intentions, which unfortunately were countervailed by some impractically idealistic ideas – but more of that elsewhere.

Before long, David was being relentlessly hounded about the whole tragic affair. Utterly and completely distraught, he just went to ground. No interviews, no appearances and certainly no shows – we buried him, kept him out of the way for as long as it would take for him to get his head together again. The press, circling like vultures round poor Bernadette's death, laid the lies on thick and laid the blame at David's door – and mine. There were reports of her having broken legs and of others injured in the crush. They were lies. There were accusations that the security had been wholly inadequate – and they were lies too. Of all the vast number of people seen by the St John Ambulance teams, I think four had to go to hospital, three of whom were diabetics suffering from hypoglycaemia as a result of having stayed out all night without food and water before going through a bout of complete and utter hysteria. There were no broken bones and, in fact, the only person detained at hospital that day was Bernadette.

The worst thing about that kind of allegation is that you can't really answer back. The part that hurt me most, obviously, was when they claimed that we hadn't provided proper security. In fact that couldn't have been further from the truth. As Mel Bush testified at the official inquest, not only did we comply with the current GLC regulations stipulating the levels of staffing and security measures required – we doubled them! Yes doubled!! So you can see why I resented the suggestion so deeply that we'd cut corners in any way. The bastards were suggesting that I'd been gambling with

little girls' lives – I'd only have been doing that if I'd just fulfilled the legal requirements and ignored what my experience and conscience told me was needed – which was a lot more.

At one point I was confronted by a surveyor, employed to look into whether any structural problems had contributed to the situation. Of course there weren't.

'What do you know about crowd control?' I demanded of him. 'And how much experience have you had of dealing with thousands of hysterical teenage girls?'

None was the answer. And there's the problem – there have been similar incidents since and now we recognise the state people can get themselves into and just how dangerous it can be. I still maintain that the root cause of tragedies like this is the fact that these kids stand in a queue for 36, even 48, hours and will not leave it for food or water or to get out of the sun or the cold because that means losing their position and their one chance of getting to the front at the show. Once you take that fact on board, it's not surprising that they're often in a desperately weakened condition long before the concert even starts. Then, having fought their way to the front of the stage, nothing on earth is going to make them relinquish their prime position – not the need to eat or drink or go to the toilet. And that's something that the people in charge of security can do nothing about. In effect, the kids are made ill and their bodies in a distressed condition before they even get in – to an environment in which you'd never dream of placing anyone in less than totally rude health!

The inquest concluded that Bernadette's trunk had been compressed for some short period – I don't know how long, something like a minute maybe...But anyway whatever the cause, it certainly wasn't the barrier because she wasn't tall enough for it to have compressed her midriff and chest area. And anyway, according to her friends' testimony she wasn't